

COMPOSITE CULTURE AND INDIAN SOCIETY

Composite Culture and Indian Society Problems and Prospects of Integration

edited by
RADHEY MOHAN

A PUBLICATION SPONSORED BY DR. ZAKIR HUSAIN
EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL FOUNDATION
NEW DELHI

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**Published by VICHAR—A Centre of thought - Provoking Literature
P.O. Box No. 5009, NEW DELHI-110022 and Printed at the
CAXTON PRESS (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi-1100055 Ph. 520267**

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VOLUME
I



सत्यमेव जयते

राष्ट्रपति

भारत गणतंत्र

PRESIDENT

REPUBLIC OF INDIA

March 28, 1984

I am glad to know that the Zakir Husain Educational and Cultural Foundation is undertaking an extensive programme of study and research in the composite and versatile culture of India.

From ancient times to the modern age, India has the privilege of producing great thinkers, saints, gurus, savants and philosophers who have contributed towards the overall development of man. Aided by ceaseless flow of their teachings, India has always espoused the cause of peace, love and brotherhood. It has assimilated the best from all religions in the world and left a rich heritage which serves as a perpetual source of spiritual upliftment and human understanding. In our efforts to develop a society based on equality and brotherhood, we have endeavoured to give a practical shape to our composite culture and to add a new dimension to freedom, democracy and international relationships based on mutual respect, understanding and friendship.

(Zail Singh)

Preface

When we speak of India, we speak not merely of political entity as the word recalls and embraces a number of other things. For instance, there is the huge manpower constituting of 740 million people, almost a sixth of the world. This population itself is a conglomeration of variety; variety in its ethnic expressions, languages, beliefs, cultural patterns, social composition and so on. All this is so commonplace that it hardly needs reiteration. Yet, it is perhaps best that we reiterate it daily, recall, as in a vision everyday with our prayers, the India of variety like a colour composite, a collage of patterns through which runs a thread of unity. Such a vision should help us balance the natural tendency to be concerned solely with our own group loyalties and needs. Similarly we could also recall that our own linguistic group is but part of the multi-lingual India. The various Indian literary movements have influenced or been influenced by one another contributing to the total richness of literature in the country. This is also true of other aspects of our culture and religions. We may also recall in this respect the historic fact that these religions which originated in this country or which came from outside, all interacted with one another and flourished only when this interaction was taking place peacefully.

Our history has rightly looked down upon all those emperors and leaders who used religion as a political weapon against others while our folklores and literatures are replete with praise of those who showed acceptance, compassion, understanding, sympathy towards others. Kabir, Nanak, Tulsi, Narsimehto, Subramania Bharti and many others influenced millions and moulded their thinking towards social harmony, moral supremacy and equality of man. At the political level also, only those like Ashoka and Akbar who had breadth of vision and saw this country as a great cultural composite, succeeded and left lasting impression and impact on this country. This should be a lesson to those who preach hatred of other religions and languages and groups in the guise of helping their own

and forwarding its interest. History shows also that events have taken their own revenge against such narrow-minded persons who tried to sow seeds of hatred or rent asunder the multi-hued fabric of Indian culture.

There is hardly any aspect of our religion, language or culture which is uni-dimensional or in which contributions have not come from other sources. One need not look far of these influences at the level of scholars and philosophers only : we have at the popular level *pirs* and *faqirs*, saints and sadhus, who are respected equally by people of different sects and religions. We have darghas, Gurdwards, Churches and shrines which attract in equal measure munificence from Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs or Hindus and Sikhs or Hindus and Christians. In fact this is how the main current of Indian history has developed to throw up a composite pattern, despite the occasional effort of a fanatic here and there to stop this process. All such efforts at interfering with the composite pattern have ultimately failed though when they were there they did damage the country and harmed the general interest.

That is why, our secular polity is considered a historic growth and not a foreign importation or a matter of convenience. It is our secularism that offers equal opportunities to people belonging to different religions, culture, groups or linguistic areas. The secular polity ensures that even the smallest minority will have opportunities to grow and to prosper and to get its share of the national cake. It is not merely tolerance; it is acceptance of the diversity; acceptance of the right of everyone to follow and preach his own beliefs and pursue his own cultural pattern. It follows that those who project a political dimension to their religious organisation would be challenging this system and would ultimately harm their own cause.

It is perhaps not enough if we merely decry such attempts at challenging our secularism in the name of rights of certain groups. These threats to secularism should be identified and met in every possible way. Ultimately, all wars begin in the minds of men and so too all peace. It is, therefore necessary, that we also make an organised effort to restate the basics of our polity, research into the composite culture of our people and focus attention, on the diversity of this nation through which the people stand united. This is especially the task of intellectuals and academicians. It is for this that we have always welcomed the intellectual exercises including the series of lectures and seminars that the Foundation organises from time to time. The publications help broadcast these intellectual efforts to

millions. The latest publication, “Composite Culture and Indian Society—problems and prospects of integration”, will not only create better awareness and understanding of our rich heritage of our composite culture but is sure to instil in people a new zeal for materialising our cherished objective of a coherent harmonious secular polity.

Ideas have wings and the good seeds that they sow should help the nation to ensure a better tomorrow for itself.

President

Dr Zakir Husain
Educational and Cultural Foundation
New Delhi.

P. Shiv Shanker
Minister of Energy

... Problems and Prospects

National Integration in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual society is an open-ended continuous process, reflecting the people's problems, difficulties as also ideals and aspirations. Naturally, it should be based on shared values and expectations to be realised through agreed methods and procedures. It was one of the objectives which the people of India set out to achieve while they won freedom from the British yoke. The national leaders who struggled for freedom were endowed with the clear vision of the goals and methods which have been eloquently articulated in the Constitution of India. A secular, socialist democracy assuring the dignity of individual and the unity of the nation—constitutes the essence of the aspirations which brought together a vast multitude of humanity comprising diverse cultures, languages, religions and economic levels of living. Taking the special care of the vulnerable and the weaker sections including the scheduled castes, tribes and minorities, the constitution propounds a set of guarantees of human rights and principles of the State policy which embody the ends and means of the Indian vision”.

Unfortunately, this process has received a severe jolt the scene today is not quite reassuring and the process of a united secular and democratic India seems to have been beseiged. The trust which had existed between the different communities for ages has been considerably weakened, if not disappeared. It is mutual suspicion that has replaced the trust. The majority suspects the minorities of attempts to assert separatist claims, while the minorities fear that the majority is out to destroy their identity. The way demands are being pressed by various pressure groups, it looks as if all of them are caught in identity crisis fearing for their existence.

The world integration is widely questioned and attempts to bring about a national identity is seen as a threat to cultural, linguistic or religious individuality. The fundamentalist movements in one garb or another have begun to assert their separateness and insist that it is their birth right to preserve and project their separate identities. Apart from the upsurge of the religious fundamentalism, we are today faced with regional

and linguistic chauvinism. Linguistic intolerance goes to the extent of even removing all sign-boards where languages other than that of the region are used thereby denying minority linguistic groups, the right to use their language even for their use. Religious fundamentalist groups assert themselves in the form of imposition of certain taboos, fossilised customs and obscurantist ways on one and all regardless of the fact whether their own group-members share them or not. The question whether there is legal sanction to this, is not relevant here. What is relevant is that by raising the mass-hysteria, law is pushed to the background and sheer un-reason reigns supreme.

We should recall that the freedom struggle was inspired through out by a secular attitude and outlook. Religion also played a vital and positive role in our freedom struggle. But every effort was made by the then rulers and fanatics to create communal discord whenever and wherever possible. During the final phases of the freedom struggle communal frenzy was deliberately provoked to an extraordinary degree leading to violence and indeed brutality which was responsible for the final acceptance of the partition of the country. And even after the goal of partition was achieved, the fanatics succeeded in bringing about an unprecedentedly massive transfer of population. Against the background of such experience, the founding fathers of our Constitution felt that a country in which so many religions were practised by its citizens, and who wished to live and develop as a democracy in which every citizen was equal before the law, must necessarily accept as its basic principle of administration, the concept of secularism requiring that religion or religious considerations should not be allowed in any way whatsoever to interfere with the policies and actions of Government. Certainly, the principle of secularism has been accepted in this sense, and it is true to say that it has been given effect to in that sense by every successive Government of our country since Independence.

But now a strange definition of secularism seems to have gained ground—that is both majority and minority groups swear in the name of secularism yet follow rank communalist methods and justify them in the name of secularism.

If every group insists in projecting its separate identity at the cost of national identity how can there be national integration? Instead of answering this, they claim that integration erodes their identity and ideas of sub-nationality are propagated with the inevitable political demand that

constitution be restructured to recognise these sub-nationalities and to whom most of the powers should be devolved.

How could such a demand be considered as favouring national integration ? The plain fact that we have to face is that we have minority groups everywhere. Even Hindus who constitute the majority are minorities in at least three States ; and there are enclaves of one linguistic group in another linguistic areas a part from the problem of bilingualism in some of the States. It was because of this also besides the historical background that the Constitution deliberately chose to have secular outlook which is not an anti-religious one but an attitude of equality towards all religions on the one hand and protection of minority interests through appropriate constitutional guarantees on the other. For instance Article 25, at present under attack by a section, provides guarantee of religious freedom and follows it up by an assurance of non-interference by the state in the religious affairs of these minorities and full rights to them to establish and run their own educational and other institutions. In addition to all this is the guarantee that in state run institutions no religious instruction would be given while minority institutions even if they are getting grants from government would have the right to preach their religion to the students of the community which runs it.

These Constitutional provisions thus ensure that the true content of secularism is enshrined in our polity. The most relevant definition of secularism for us here is that the "Secular State is one which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion."

The roots of this secular polity lie deep in the freedom movement and in the irrigating of these roots by the philosophies of both by Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Nehru. In a country deeply tied to religion, caste and creed, Gandhiji saw that the idea of nationhood could only be instilled if it had a religious base and yet he resolved the dilemma in his famous statement that he saw no conflict between religion and politics. He could attract the people to his political action because he evolved this vaction itself integrating the *nishkam karma* of the Gita, the passive resistance of the Gospels and similar other principles from other religions. In the same process he could instil the principle of viewing all religions as

equal while he remained a staunch Hindu himself. By this personal example he could prove that one could be deeply religious, moderate political action through ethical principles and yet achieve harmony between various religious groups so necessary for a nationalist outlook. On the other hand Jawaharlal Nehru who had to carry the burden of building the Indian nationalist idea in the post-independence period was deeply moved by the senseless killings of the partition era, the trauma of partition on the minority Muslim community, the challenge of Hindu orthodoxy and extremism to his liberal policies and so fashioned the polity away from all religious trappings.

That Pt. Nehru had to fight a long battle with Hindu orthodoxy not only outside his party but also inside, is not that well recognised. But the history of the passage of the Hindu Code Bill gives adequate evidence of this epic battle. One aspect of this battle was that the secularism as conceived by Pt. Nehru triumphed over the concept of secularism as a nearly equality of religions, as conceived by many including some Gandhians. It must be emphasised that while Pt. Nehru was deeply moved by Western liberal ideas, Gandhiji's was a more native version of socialism based on the concept of dignity of work for which he found philosophical and *cultural* justification from the native ideologies. As the dominant ideologies were religious, Gandhiji had to seek justification for his idea of equality, dignity and other attributes of secular citizenship in terms of religious or divine concepts. The way Gandhiji conceived and conducted his prayer meetings is an example of the type of cultural integration, the concept of a composite religious ethos, that he hoped to foster to achieve national integration. After the mantle of the Mahatma fell on Pt. Nehru he deliberately steered the nation clear of such religious base and sought to build a national ethos on the basic ethics of the Indian philosophy which led him to the moral tenets like *Panch Sheel*. It is also significant that he could attract several Muslim intellectuals in this quest of nation-building on non-religious secular principles. However it is better for us to recognise that he and his band of intellectual followers could not break the hard crust of caste and creed. The economic rat race for sharing the benefits of development which soon seized the country, as the economy expanded and its opportunities multiplied, strengthened old divisions as individuals found it more convenient to utilise their group identity to seize a larger share of the cake or protect their existing share. It became apparent to one and all that they should retain a foothold in any power structure as members of group. It is because of this that old

group loyalties in the form of caste, creed, etc. have flared up. This has also brought into prominence traditional leaders who can now influence voting patterns and thereby have a significant say in the power structure.

The revivalism that has gripped caste and religious groups have not only a socio-economic justification but is also the natural reflex of a people suddenly face to face with modernity and unable to cope up with its psychological demands while their minds are moulded by the culture of ages. There is thus a clear movement away from integration and towards emphasising religio-cultural identities and caste loyalties and linguistic affinities. These are neither undimensional nor concentric. These are criss-crossing currents or rather intersecting circles which make the task of national integration in the composite cultural milieu of India a more complex a more difficult job than it would have been normally. However, a proper analysis of the parameters of this composite and complex situation is essential if we are ever to grapple with the problems of national integration. Neither a mere denunciation or revivalism nor a declaration of integration as the new faith is going to save the situation for us.

The inequalities that are so prominent in the country get projected more sharply in any democracy practising adult franchise. Socio-cultural inequalities are now compounded by new class distinctions brought about by economic development, particularly industrialisation and modernisation. Take the common man for instance. A middle class employee in a firm, to begin with. He still has his traditional loyalty as a member of his caste group. If he speaks a language other than the dominant regional language, he has difficulty in coping up with the increasingly aggressive postures of the dominant linguistic group and seeks his security by joining his own minority language group to obtain political clout. If he is a Muslim in a predominantly Hindu environment, he is drawn to revivalism as a means of obtaining protection against a majority assault and to improve his chances of advancement if minority groups could provide it. In new environments of industrial culture, he fights a sense of alienation by belonging to either his linguistic or cultural or religious group and sometimes to all of them. There are thus inter-secting loyalties working on him at any given moment of time each forcing him to emphasise his belonging to a group as well as separateness from the majority around. This is how cultural composite and identity crisis act simultaneously affecting national integration with all their political concomitants. To put it more simply, the common man in this country,

particularly in urban areas, may belong by religion to majority group but by language to a minority group or by caste to a majority group but by language to a minority or vice versa ; by his economic interest (like worker, white collar employee or executive) to a majority group but by language and caste to a minority group. Each type of combination has its own locii and its own typical reaction. It is not simply Hindu-Muslim or Harijan-Brahmin or Tamil-Kannad conflict. In other words, the problems of rintegration also are not one to be seen in these two in one term. The interaction of various complexes has to be seriously analysed. It is a social engineers delight as much as a political designer's challenge.

It is perhaps best for us to recognise that democracy with its constant need to build areas of support and the urge to ventilate grievances of various, cannot but magnify the apparent differences. No serious student of history will challenge the assumption that India had a cultural unity transcending its geographic diversity and vastness and political pragmentation. The tensions on the fabric of unity have always been varied but the remarkable fact is that it held. Islam was the major outside induction of a religion which was accompanied by the political strong arm and conquering tribes, though we had to contend with periodic tribal invasions even before Islam came to India. When it first came Islam had to break through the encrusted religious orthodoxy which left a trail of blood and bitterness. But subsequent tribal invasions were no less kind to the earlier Islamic kingdoms and their civilisation. It was thus that Islam developed two levels of impact, one at the political level which was often violent and the other at the popular level which was largely peaceful. It was because the latter level contact was a conquest of minds rather than of bodies that Islam not only spread rapidly but also began to adopt increasingly indigenous forms of cultural expressions.

The Hindu-Muslim interaction at the popular level has not as yet been studied with any degree of authenticity while the several conflicts and occasional co-operation at the political level have received the bulk of academic scrutiny and public knowledge. How did the Hindu society encrusted with caste, react to the induction of a faith that at once removed distinctions of birth and conferred a human dignity on what the Hindu society considered as the "low-born"? There is also the interesting phenomenon that certain economic caste interests, like the *banyas*, remained staunch Hindus while the suppliers of their wares, like the artisans embraced Islam wholesale. However this did not change their economic relationships. The peaceful economic co-operation of various

class interests despite their distinct religious differences after the conversions, should surprise those who are familiar only with the bloody encounters of religious and sectoral differences in Europe as late as 16th to 18th century. Even the political conflicts, at least after the 15th century here were no long Hindu-Muslim conflicts. The Mughal emperors, particularly from Akbar onwards, received unquestioned loyalty of several Hindu generals. They also picked up, fostered and actively promoted Hindu intellectuals, artists, poets, and artisans at all levels. While at popular level the *bhakti* movement arose attracting vast multitudes behind either a Hindu or Muslim saint, at the political level empires began to be built, run and expanded by Muslim rulers with enormous help from Hindus and to some extent vice versa also. The factual analysis of this interaction is yet to be explored in full. That would be the future task of history. But such interaction could not have been without its fruit, namely Muslim as well as Hindu contribution to literature, arts, sciences etc.

It is out of this interaction that what we now refer to as the composite culture was born, an enriching experience which enabled India to maintain its cultural as well as economic dominance till about the 18th century after which began the simultaneous decline of both. It was in the trough of this decline that once again religious differences began to strike roots, the economic conflicts began to surface and several other consequences followed. The impact of this could be seen in the history of the pre-war years. Even as the Muslim League was crying religion in danger, there was Ustad Allaiddin Khan being patronised by the Hindu king of an obscure central Indian State. In music, fine arts and literature the interaction continued unabated despite the political cleavage. Prem Chand evolved a language mixing Urdu words freely with Hindi in his literature which used both Hindu and Muslim medium. *Hindu bhakti* songs were freely sung by Muslim *ustads* in setting them to the music evolved by themselves. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement though essentially Hindu rose above the narrow confines of Hinduism and tried to project an ultra-religious modern idiom of spirituality. Not that this did not prevent Hindu-Muslim riots or assertion of religious narrowmindedness on either side but the fact that the process of integration was simultaneously on while the seeds of partition were being sown, should be noted for what it is worth.

Every modern nation faces the problem of national integration and its conflict with advancement of sectional interests. As we have noted above, the average Indian has many loyalties and each loyalty has its own

dimension of political action or potential political action. This at once increases the number of forces acting on the national fabric and the level of tension that it has to bear. It often creates the impression that the break-down level is almost upon us. But recent history also shows how these forces get mellowed and the over all fabric of national unity is ultimately strengthened. To take some extreme cases : Naga "separatism" almost threatened to succeed but found a means of working within the Indian framework; a Tamil separatist party came to power after it eschewed separatism and has run a state for the last 17 years without break; an anti-cow slaughter agitation could in 1966 sweep the north, today it will not get even a handful of sustained supporters; despite creation of linguistic states there are more linguistic minorities in all states than there were in 1957 and more migration takes place than ever; business communities, professional and executive classes and even working classes are becoming more multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-caste than ever before. Certainly the fabric of national unity has held.

No academic analysis, however good, could be a substitute for political and voluntary action. Even the underlying cultural unity would have to be stressed at least to act as a counter force to the centrifugal tendencies surfacing all the time. The concept of the nationhood, the elements of culture which are common heritage would have to be constantly defined and identified. Just as a religion needs a common prayer in which all can join, the nation needs certain common symbols and ethos which all can own up as theirs for which they will be ready to sacrifice anything. Normally these common heritage should include the abiding natural features like the Himalayas, the Ganga etc which must invoke an emotional response in every Indian. Being a deeply religious people, we should also take as our own common heritage the basic principles of all the great religions that are extant in the country. Lastly the Constitution, the flag, the anthem, should all come in the category of these symbols which every citizen must take it as part of his inner being. Once we fix these parameters of our nationalism and inculcate the right attitude towards it, we can let all our sectional interests and multi-dimensional sectional loyalties to have their full play. The discussions on the theme of cultural composite and problems of national integration should help in understanding the problems of a "one nation, one people" concept in a multi-layered culture which is so part of ourselves like our skin.

Radhey Mohan

The Roots and Origins of Composite Culture in India

Rasheeduddin Khan

HISTORICALLY, India has been one of the greatest confluences of cultural strands, a laboratory of racial inter-mixing of cross-fertilisation of religious ideas and secular thought, of co-existence of languages and dialectics, indeed a veritable microcosm of the Globe.

India, a determinate territorial region, with the second largest population in the World, is more than a nation and bigger than a state. Indeed it represents a fascinating coalescence of cultures, embodied in a distinct unified civilization - part dead and part dying, but more significant is that larger part which is vibrant, regenerative, adaptive and innovative. It is therefore instructive to stretch-back to the past (not for revivalism, much less for chauvinism) for a rational, systematic attempt to grasp the roots of our specific heritage, in order to identify the vital and the humanistic components in it.

India comprises myriad streams of cultures, about 16 major languages, between 250 to 2000 dialectics, a dozen ethnic groups, 7 religious communities fragmented into many sects, castes and sub-castes, that inhabit its 58 socio-cultural sub-regions, which within the framework for seven natural geographic regions, exhibit, distinct internal homogeneity and external identity. Within India's macro-continental spread is thus subsumed, regionally varied but specific social *formations*, *economic relations*, *cultural patterns*, and *value-structures*, that give an impress of vivid and vibrant scheme of *unity in diversity*, India's ongoing socio-cultural federalism, is thus *sue genesis*. Its continental dimension, survival and continuity for more than 3000 years of recorded history (and possibly one to two thousand years of pre-history) together with social complexity and cultural diversities in-depth, makes it the world's oldest, largest and the

most tenacious plural society, the like of which human history has seldom known.

The main characteristics that mark the history of this, one of the World's most gigantic *federal ensemble*, that is India, are *continuity* (notwithstanding change) *assimilation* (not precluding *conflicts*) and *synthesis* (not overlooking the polarities of *theses* and *anti-theses*). Examined more closely, one might even suggest a causality-linkages between the three characteristics. Continuity is the result of the triumph of assimilation and synthesis. Assimilation and synthesis in turn have been the two dominant process of Indian society. This was almost inevitable considering the circumstances that have attended the genesis, spread and dialectics of its growth. A peculiar combination of geographical factors interacting with historical forces have marked out India as a distinct socio-political entity. The physical location of the land : a sprawling sub-continent whose natural boundaries determined by the Himalayan ranges cutting it away from the Asian mainland and jutting it into the sea as a well carved peninsula, provided a determinable territorial homogeneity for the rise of a distinctive civilization.

In the dim twilight of History the migration of primordial hordes of ethnic groups mostly from Central, South-Central and North-Eastern parts of Asia that have wave upon wave descended into the fertile Indo-Gangatic plains moving south-wards to the alluvial Deccan plateau inhabited by the earliest known indigenous people, provided the first pattern of inter-ethnic mixture in the mighty generous land that was to become one of the biggest crucible of races and cultures in human history.

The Dravidians, the Aryans, the Semetics and the Mongoloids in varied patterns of permutation and combination provide the ethnic substratum of Indian civilization. The pagan Aryan tribes followed by the Sakas, the Yue-chi, Kushans, Bactrians, Scythians and the Huns had made inroads into *Bharatavarsha* in the hoary past, even as the muslim migratory clans of the Uzbeks, the Turkoman, the Tajiks, the Iranian, the Turanian, the Afghan, and the Pathan moved-in during the mediaeval times and made Hindustan their homeland. With multi-ethnic migrants came their dialects and belief patterns, social systems and value-structures, all contributing to the expanding cultural diversity and societal diffusion in the historic process of the building of what is today the continental plural society of India, comprising a fifth of the total human population.

In terms of cultural depth and intensity and wider social repercussions the two most profound influences on the making of a distinct

Indian civilization, are those of the ancient *Indo-Aryan* and the mediaeval Indo-Muslim segments. The Indo-Aryans contributed to the following of Vedic cultural streams that over the centuries have continued to fertilize the body politic of this ancient land, and even today remains the sub-soil of acculturation. The Indo-Muslim strands have weaved into the texture of India's national existence a rich design of 'composite culture', by intertwining the threads of the *Bhakta Marg* with the *Islamic Sufi* (Mystic) traditions, the Indian social customs with the Turko-Iranian modes of collective life, thereby creating a new inter-cultural synthesis, in which the values of man and social ethics reflected a new ethos.

It is not surprising, therefore, to realize that the composite culture in India originated in an environment of reconciliation rather than refutation, cooperation rather than confrontation, coexistence rather than mutual annihilation of the politically dominant Islamic strands (represented essentially by the Iranian, the Turko-Afghan and the Central Asian—mainly Khwarizm, Khorasan, Balkh, Bukhara - cultural 'mix') and the socio-culturally widespread and ramified Hindu traditional substratum particularly covering the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the middle sub-castes like Rajputs, Thakurs, Jats, Marwaris, Baniyas to the adaptable Kayasthas and Khatris, and the land-based middle castes like Yadav, Rajputs, Thakurs, Jats, Ahir, Kurmis, Gujars, etc., in the wide expanse of the Indo-Gangetic belt.

The Historic roots of the crystallisation of composite culture in India can be traced to the period between 12th and 16th century A.D. when in Indo-Gangetic plains a continuous process of comingling and fusion took place between heritages originating in three geographically determined culture belts, namely the Arabian, the Iranian and the Indian, and representing three mainsprings of religio-ethical systems : Islam, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism, each in turn subsuming with novation and mutation, the ancient Judaic, the Manian and the Vedic-Vedantic traditions, respectively.

Into the making of this composite culture has gone a chequered history of about a thousand years, interlaced with episodes of clash of arms, tussles for power and supremacy and the more abiding encounters marked by the fraternal cooperation of divergent people learning to live together as compatriots, humanist saints and mystics of the age, and by the more enlightened citizen—leaders, poets, musicians, craftsmen, artisans, story-tellers, social reforms and secular nationalist political leaders, and statesmen.

While force in the sense of political power and patronage, military might and battle-did play its part as the 'midwife of History', to borrow Marx's pregnant phrase, but in the working out of a new synthesis out of the ideational clash of the indigenous and the exogenous, the Hindu and the Muslim, the orthodox and the heterodox, the priestly-dogmatised and the mystic-humanists, more than force, it was the unconscious cumulative impulse of accommodation of the encountering socio-cultural and ethnic groups to share and comingle their myriad streamlets of heritage into a new confluence, that finally transformed the mighty river of 'composite culture' into a magnificent life-stream of national life.

A little diversion may be permitted here to clarify an important aspect of historiography. By certain schools, subscribing to an approach, that is referred to as the 'communalist-orientation' of social analysis, history of the mediaeval period is sought to be misread by injecting into the motives of armed conflicts, factors of religion both in their 'crusading' and 'resisting' aspects as the most significant element in the making of events. This is in fact a tendentious attempt to substantiate the untenable hypothesis that mediaeval period in the history of India, is a period of prolonged, and bitter conflict between the two major religious congregations, namely the Hindus and the Muslims. The latter are supposed to be zealous 'crusaders' for Islamization of the country and the former are depicted as tenacious adherents of a resistance movement. It is surprising that the nature of feudal overlordship between competing elite countries, including those who were recent migrants is overlooked. Similarly the pattern of adjustments and compromises worked-out between the power-coteries presided over by Hindu and Muslim aristocratic hegemonies are underplayed and above all the factors of class and strata and the segmentary nature of society is lost sight of. Profane rulers, motivated by impulses of power, conquest, wealth, glory, hegemony are paid undeserved compliments as the heroes of the so-called religious wars. A closer scrutiny of history would reveal that clash of arms was marked by assertion of dynastic glories, ambitions of empire-building, sometimes pursued under the false garb of the spread of religion primarily for rallying support of the rank-and-file and to go down in 'formal history' (prepared by Court chroniclers) as an idealist hero, thus hiding passion for power as injunctions of the faith. If one were to depend entirely on Court historians, they would successfully mislead us to believe that the fights between two opposing beligerent camps of feudal competitors for hegemony comprising essentially inter-religious and inter-denominational wars, fought for the glory of God and the benefaction of mankind.

The ideational roots :

Etymologically the term *composite* was first used in the architectural sense (which incidentally is the only one recognised by Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary). It referred to the fifth of the classical orders, being composed of the Ionic grafted upon the Corinthian. Later on the term has been used in Mathematics (to refer to *composite number*, which is the product of two or more factors, greater than unity); in Natural History (to mean an organic aggregation of individuals, or of distinct parts); in Botany (to identify a flower that consists really of a close-head of many small flowers (florets') sessile on a common receptacle) and, of late, in Photography (for a photo that combines several separate pictures). In common language it is a term referring to anything made up of various parts or elements, that is a compound. Its synonyms included words like; blended, eclectic, syncretic, multiform variegated, inter-mixed, pluralistic, etc. A thing is called composite, when it is made up of various and disparate parts or elements; as an organic aggregation of distinct parts.

Philosophically, composite culture would mean that peculiar brand of culture that represents the rejection of mono-cultural domination and re-affirmation of pluralism and syncreticism, as the valid, the stable and the desirable bases for cultural efflorescence in a mixed society and plural polity like India. Composite Culture is a product of borrowing, sharing and fusing through over-time processes of interaction between two or more streams, in the belief that such cultural symbioses has a propensity for greater vitality, through larger acceptability, than mono-culture, either of the dominant or the dominated ethnic segment, within a region, much less than in the huge continental macrocosm of India.

Today, what we call 'composite culture' includes more than its original medieval form. It has widened its dimensions in the last two hundred years, in the wake of the encounter with European industrialization, and the mighty sweep of the national liberation movement.

In broad essentials the composite Culture of India, includes at least the following streams of influence:

- i) The Vedantic vision imbued with a sense of toleration and even respect for the many paths to truth.
- ii) The essence of the philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* that salvation is through action, and action is duty well done without expectation of reward.
- iii) The traditions of Bhakti-marg, emphasizing 'love' as the axial principle of life-love of god and love of Man, as the means of

the mystic vision and the unitive state, for the attainment of Peace, Harmony and Liberation.

- iv) The Central concepts of Islam—brotherhood of man, justice as the governing principle of social ethics, charity towards the have-nots, rejection of priesthood, simplicity of dogma, monotheism, emphasis on the beneficent (*Rehman*) and the merciful (*Rahim*) attributes of God, with implications for mercy and beneficence towards the creatures of God in fulfilment of the 'obligations towards humanity' (*haq-il-ibad*).
- v) The message of muslim *sufi silsilas* (mystic orders) whose saints became popular heroes, as charismatic focus of human charity, fraternisation of different communities, upholders of the rights of man and dissenters against the tyranny of the Sultans and the feudal aristocracy, and their *Khanqahs* (monasteries) provided refuge to the wretched, the miserable, the downtrodden and the disinherited.
- vi) The elegance and ethos of the syncretic Indo-Muslim cultural values manifested in social relations, inter-personal dealings, etiquettes of daily life (marked with cultivated urbanity, gentility and restraint, deference towards elders and compassion towards dependents etc.) and refinement in tastes (sartorial, culinary, house-hold, life-style etc.)
- vii) The cosmopolitanism of the modern urban development, that had sought to provide an incipient cultural form, for the migrants from the rural hinterland, as well as the increasing progeny in the city, caught-up in the vortex of change brought by the introduction of the Machine, the organised bureaucracy, secular laws (whose observance was supervised by 'charistian' colonial masters), western-scientific education imparted through the English language, and the rise of the Indian bourgeoisie, urban professional and proletariat classes. Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Allahabad (between mid-19th and mid-20th century) provide for different patterns of study, replete with similarities yet marked with contrasts.
- viii) The heritage of the Indian National Movement, which was itself the most magnificent expression of composite culture in national politics, provided an all-India platform for articulating the values inherent in composite culture, and thereby drew

sustenance from the heritage of composite culture and in turn enriched it with contemporary and more relevant values of collective life like secular nationalism, democracy, equal rights, promotion of science, technology and rationalist temper. It was the most broad-based anti-colonial mass movement in history. It was a multiethnic, multi-religious, multi-regional and multi-lingual movement, non-xenophobic and forward looking, stretching its hands to other liberation movements, in the firm conviction that fight against imperial systems, colonialism, racial discrimination and ethnic domination, is a world-wide challenge, requiring concerted world-wide response. The finest elements in the Indian National Movement subscribed to the values of humanism and human fraternity, pluralism of cultures and unity of political action for freedom, democratic construction, secular polity and nationalism as part of inter-dependent internationalism.

The Philosophical Origins and traditions

In stark simplicity, the formative ideational elements of the Composite Culture should be recognised as a product of the encounters between the streams of Hindu traditions, the *Vedanta*, (Upanishads) and the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *tariqaat* (mystic Sufi-path) stream of Islamic consciousness. In its modern manifestation, however, the impact of Christian ideals, European thought and British institutions, had further refined and expanded its range, and the Indian National Movement for Independence gave impetus to its wider acceptability, by the increasingly large number of the educated and the enlightened citizens, particularly in the urban areas.

Let us at this point, briefly comprehend the nature of Hinduism and the Muslim-Sufi traditions in India.

What is the connotation of the term Hinduism? Is it only a religion, a belief system, or something more?

Hinduism is no religion, in the sometic sense of the word, that is, if the paradigm of West Asian belief-system, the Judaic-Christians-Islamic combine is acknowledged as the normative form. It is something more and different than religion. It is a mix of customs, traditions, social behaviour, rituals, metaphysical speculations, cultural and value orientations. There is no duality of orthodoxy and heresy in Hinduism, because there is no defined and closed faith, no established church, based on the

foundations of a divine scripture revealed by a 'Divine Being' to divinely ordained Prophet/Prophets. This gives Hinduism a flexibility and resilience and a traditional base wide enough to cover the syndrome of the entire Indian culture. That is why sometimes the revivalism of Hinduism takes the form of revivalism of ancient culture, symbols, values, idiom and simplistic traditional pattern of living. It does not take the particular form of the revival of a faith because there is no such ordained, integral and defined faith to be revived. Hinduism's religious content has been generally referred to as Brahminism, while the term Hindu (adapted from Sindhu, i.e. the inhabitants in around and beyond (to the East of) the river Indus/Sindhu) which was used by the ancient Persians, Greeks and later by the Arabs, referred essentially to the ethnic geographic identity of the inhabitants. Irrespective of belief and religion, language or culture, every Indian is *Hindi* to the Arabs, the Iranians and the Turks, as to most others even now.

A very apt quotation from Jawaharlal Nehru will throw light on this respect. In the *Discovery of India* he wrote :

"The word 'Hindu' does not occur at all in our ancient literature. The first reference to it in an Indian book is, I am told, in a *Tantrik* work of the eighth century A.D., where 'Hindu' means a people and not the followers of a particular religion. But it is clear that the word is a very old one as it occurs in the *Avesta* and in old Persian. It was used then and for thousand years or more later by the peoples of Western and Central Asian for India, or rather for the people living on the other side of the Indus river. The word is clearly derived from *Sindhu*, the old, as well as the present Indian name for the Indus.

From this *Sindhu* came the words Hindu and Hindustan, as well as Indus and India. The famous Chinese pilgrim I-tsing, who came to India in the seventh century A.D., writes in his record of travels that is the 'northern tribes', that is the people of Central Asia, called India 'Hindu' (Hsin-tu) but, he adds, 'this is not at all a common name...and the most suitable name for India is the the Noble Land (Aryadesha)'. The use of the word 'Hindu' in connection with a particular religion is of very late occurrence".

"The old inclusive term for religion in India was *Arya dharma*. Dharma really means something more than religion. It is from a root word which means to hold together : It is the inmost constitu-

tion of a thing, the law of its inner being. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness, and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities, *Arya dharma* would include all the faiths (*Vedic* and *non-Vedic*) that originated in India; it was used by Buddhists and Jains as well as by those who accepted the *Vedas*. Buddha always called his way to salvation as the 'Arya Path'.

The philosophy of Hinduism has developed in the last 4000 years, in six well-recognised periods of time : (i) 2500 to 600 B.C. — *The Vedic Period*; (ii) 600/500 B.C. to 200 A.D. — *The Epic Period*; (iii) 200 to 800 A.D. — *The Sutra Period*, (iv) 800 to 1300 A.D. — *the Scholastic Period*; (v) 1300 to 1700 A.D.—the period of the great *Bhakti Saints*; and (vi) 1800 to 1950 A.D. — the period of *Reform Movements and Philosophical Revivalism*.

Two aspects of the Hindu traditions, relevant to our discussion, may now be mentioned.

For 'the emancipation of the soul' (*moksha*), which is the highest goal of human exertion in Hindu thought, and which in secular language may be called the quest for morally good life, the Hindu traditions recognize three paths : (i) *Karma marga* (literally, the 'path of action' but actually the path of conformism to doctrines, acceptance of destiny and resignation to mortal fate within the framework of the four-fold Caste (*Varna*) and fourfold stages of life (*asrama*), that is *varnasrama dharma* (predestined order of life). (ii) *Jnanamarga* (literally, the 'path of knowledge', as epitomised in Upanishads and the Sutra literature dealing with discussions regarding cosmic origin, human destiny, good and evil, nature of the ultimate reality and its relation to the individual etc., and (iii) *Bhakta-marga* (literally the 'path of devotion', that helps the 'devotee' to attain salvation through love of a personal god and compassion towards fellow-men, is sometimes referred to as the emotional aspect of faith, in contradiction to 'intellectual' or the 'conactive' as implied respectively in the *Jnana* and the *karma margas*. The biggest sources of inspiration for the *Bhakta marg*, is Bhagavad-gita, the Narayaniya section of the Shanti parva of Mahabharata, and the *Bodhisattva* and *Amitabha* concepts in Mahayana Buddhism.

It is the *Bhakta-marg*, "which began as a little trickle in the Vedic time went out with the advance of history as a mighty flood sweeping over the whole land", even as the *jnana marga* remained confined to the priestly (and arrogant) few, and *karma marga* got stultified into compliance with ascribed duty.

The second aspect that needs to be stressed is that there has been a persistent dichotomy in the Hindu society, reflective of more than mere class cleavages of differentiation of status-groups in any society. The existence of two distinct social strata or two levels of consciousness, one higher and the other lower, one smaller and the other more populous, the one as 'closed' custodians of traditional knowledge and philosophy, of social ideas and institutions, and the second comprising the general mass of people with their folk and regional traditions, on the lower rung of the social and cultural ladder had almost permanently bifurcated the Hindu society at the vertical level. Brahminical social exclusiveness, monopoly of knowledge, refusal to allow the lower-caste even the learning of the Sanskrit language, discrimination in rituals and social intercourse, endogamy all of which represented a sort of operational socio-cultural apartheid, had kept the Hindu society divided into compartments, and its castes almost counterposed to each other. Inequality and segregation was permitted and even sanctified by *dharmashastra* and by the laws of Manu that dominated the scene.

Now let us briefly recapitulate the origins and growth of the Muslim-Sufi traditions.

Before the Sufi orders (*silsilah*) emerged on the Indian scene in the latter half of the 12th century A.D., Islamic mysticism had already developed a large corpus of knowledge and practices. Indeed all the great names among the Sufis of Arabia, Persia, Central Asia and Spain were already inscribed on the pages of Islamic history, prior to the mighty spread of Sufism on the Indian soil.

There were four distinct stages in the development of Islamic Sufi traditions in other parts of the world :

(a) 623-800 A.C. : The Period of the Quietist Mystics :

The Sufi tradition in Islam can be traced, in its incipient form, even to the time of Prophet Muhammed (571-622 A.D.) when *Ashab-e-Sufa* (Companions of the Platform) known for their piety, poverty and philosophical proclivity were considered to have formed an esoteric group in 623 A.D. To them Prophet himself was a mystic, and Ali, who later became last of the four virtuous Caliphs (Khulafa-i-Rashideen) (656-61), and has been recognized throughout Islamic history as the fountain-head of Islamic mysticism, as their patron head. Among the early Sufi pioneers, the name of al-Hasan al-Basri (d. 728) of the famous occultist Jabir-ibn-Hayyan (ca-776) and his contemporary Ibrahim ibn-Adham of Balkh (ca.777) are well-known.

(b) 800-1100 A.D.—The Period of Early Mystic Theorists :

Among the second round of mystics names of Abu-Sulayman-al Darani (d. 849/50) of Damascus, and his older contemporary Maruf al-Karkhi of Baghdad (d. 815) and above all the Persian Bayazid al-Bustami (d.875); whose grandfather was a magian or Zoroastrian and, whose teacher Abu Ali al-Sindi, is reputed to have been influenced by Advaitic philosophy of Sankara, and Buddhist thought, are well known. It was Bayazid al-Bustami, who had introduced the doctrine of *fana* (self-annihilation or the passing away of the self) reminiscent of Buddhist *Nirvana*, and Vedantic monism, in Islamic mysticism. His contemporary Shaikh Junaid (d. 900 A.D.) of Baghdad revered for 'mystic sobriety' believed in the theory of 'union', that is oneness of existence and the communion between God and man. It was his pupil Hasan-ibn-Mansural-Hallaj (d. 972) the prince of mystic martyrs, who was flogged and burned to death by the Abbasid inquirers for the formula *Ana'l-Haqq* (I am the truth/God) which had reverberated for centuries as the most daring mystic utterance ever made.

(c) 1100-1200 : The Period of Spanish-Arab Intellectualism :

One of the greatest name in Sufism, has been of the Spaniard, Muhyi-uddin Mahammad ibn-Arabi (1165-1240) buried in Damascus and known as Shaikh-Akbar (the great teacher), who was a brilliant monist and pantheist ('all is god') and gave a system and a method to Islamic Sufism.

At this point, it may be added that Muslim Spain (Andalusia, 711-1609) "wrote one of the brightest chapters in the intellectual history of mediaeval Europe. Between the middle of the eighth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries . the Arabic speaking people were the main bearers of the torch of culture and civilization throughout the world...In all this, Arabic Spain had a large share. The four most outstanding intellectual precursors of ibn-Arabi in Muslim Spain were Ali ibn-Hazm (994-1064) of Cordova, Ibn Bajjah (d.1138) who lived in Seville and Granada, and was known in Europe as Avempace, his pupil was ibn-Tufayal (d. 1185), and the incomparable ibn-Rushd (1126-1198) born in Cordova, and called in the West as Averroes, and recognized as 'the second Aristotle'.

(d) 1100-1500 A.C. The Period of Sufi Efflorescence :

In the entire belt between the Fertile Crescent from Jerusalem and Damascus with Baghdad as the hub of activity, extending to the Iran-Central Asian region covering cultural centres like Khurasan Khwarm

Tus, Nishapur and Balkh, a mighty up-surge of intellectual enquiry, rationalism, and Sufi traditions taking place. The contemporary of the Spaniard ibn-Arabi, was the Persian Sufi, Shaikh Shahabuddin Suhrawardi (1145-1234?).

The first Sufi fraternity that was formed as an established path (tariqah) was the Qadariah silsilah, whose founder was the Persian Shaikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166) who lived, preached and died in Baghdad. He is referred to by the common devotees in India as the Patron Saint (*Barah Pir*). Indeed after him formal mystic orders, took shape. In his order which with certain subsidiary orders, is probably the most widespread Sufi order throughout the Muslim world, covering North and West Africa, and West, Central, South and South-East Asia in its fold. In the Indian sub-continent the *Qadiriyya* and its affiliate the Chistiyya silsilah has been the most dominant throughout the last 700-800 years.

In terms of ethical teachings, imbued with mystic humnism and literary grace, the three outstanding names in the 'Ajam region' are those of the Persian Sufi teachers : Fariduddin Attar (1136-1230) of Nishapur, Shaikh Saadi Shirazi (1184-1292) the world-renowned author of *Bostan* and *Gulistan*, and one of the greatest intellectual luminary, and incomparable mystic poet Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-1273) who was born in Balkh, lived in Tus and Nishapur and died in Qunyah in Turkey, whose six volume *Mathnawi* of 26,000 couplets is probably the greatest of the Persian Uzbek-Turkish language.

It was this rich and varied heritage of the early Muslim Sufi traditions—of Bagdhad, Damascus, Jerusalem, Aleppo, Cordova, Seville, Granada, Kharasan, Tus, Nishapur, Balkh, Khwarizm. Shiraz, Ghazna, Harat, etc., that provided a universal dimension to the core teachings of the Sufi saints of India.

The Sufi Saints, the Bhakti Yogis and the Mystic Poets of India :

It was in the last decade of the 12th Century that the first Sufi order was firmly established in India, by the great Chisti saint, Khwaja Muinuddin Hasan Chisti (1143-1234). He was born in Seistna and came to India on the direction of his teacher Khwaja Usman Haruni in 1190 during the reign of Rai Prithviraj, the powerful Chauhan King of Ajmer and Delhi. In his youth he had also visited Baghdad to spend time at the Khanqah of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Uilani, the great founder of the Qadariah silsilah. It is true that before him many Sufi teachers came to India, like Shaikh Ali Qujjwiri, popularly known as Data Gunj Baksh of

Lahore, at whose tomb Khwaja Muinuddin spent much time in meditation, before moving to Ajmer in 1197, as the permanent centre of his activities.

There were also several towns in north India like Multan, Lahore, Badaun, Kanouj, Nagar, etc., where Sufi teachings were spreading since the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century. But it was left to Khwaja Ajmeri to go down in history as the 'Sultan-ul-Hind' (the spiritual sovereign of India) and the 'Naib-e-Rasullulah fil Hind' ('the Vice-regent of the Prophet in India). He remains the 'Patriarch-saint' of the sub-continent. His main effort was to promote harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims, to combat against caste inequalities and other inhumanities by preaching the message of Monism, Peace and social ethics. His piety, simplicity and sincerity won him many devotees, from different castes and creed.

Although Abul-Fazl in *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions 14 Sufi silsilahs as active in India by the 16th century, but the fact remains that in terms of their following and better-organization, only 6 Silsilahs should be recognised as active and influential. Of these the Chistiyah, founded in India by Khwaja Ajmeri (though begun by Khwaja Abdul Chisti (d. 966 in Iran) attracted the largest of devotees, both Muslims and Hindus, and also made a profound impact on the course of the new Bhakti movement among the Hindus that gained momentum in the 14th century, and spread-out to many parts of the country in the next three hundred years. The only other Silsilah active in the Sultanate period (1206-1526) was the *Suhrawardia*, with its headquarter in Multan, and later extending to Sindh, which was established in India by Shaikh Bahauddin Zakaria (d. 1192). Then came the *Firdausi* silsilah, mainly restricted to Bihar, that was founded by Shaikh Badruddin Samarkhandi and was spread by the prolific writer of mystic literature Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Muniri around the 13th century, followed by *Qadiriya* and the *Shuttariah* silsilah in the middle of the 15th century. The Qadriyah was established in India by Shah Naymatullah Qadiri, and the *Shuttariah* by Shah Abdullah Shuttari (d. 1458), the former, has spread in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and the Deccan, while the latter mainly in the Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat regions. In the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) the last of six major silsilah, the *Naqshbandiah* was established by Khwaja Baqi billah (1563-1603) whose most famous saint was Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi (d. 1625) known as 'Mujaddid Alif Saani' (The Refomer of the tenth century).

In the dominant *Chistiyah* silsilah, Khwaja Ajmeri (d. 1234) was succeeded by a galaxy of brilliant saints for almost a continuous period of

200 years, [whose names still evoke tremendous popular devotion and reverence, and around whom an entire movement of human fraternity was built. These saints of the people, rose in public estimation for their message of love, humanism, compassion, and above all for their heroic defiance of autocracy and tyranny, scrupulous dissociation from holding offices of religious affairs under the Sultans, and for keeping distance from the life and life-styles of the feudal aristocrats and propertied strata of the mediaeval society.

Khawaja Ajmeri's principle successor, Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (d. 1235) established the Chisti Centre in Delhi. This was the time of recurrent mongol invasions throughout Central Asia, where many Centres of cultural life were destroyed. Scholars, artists, men of skills and crafts were flocking to Delhi, 'which by the end of the 13th century became one of the great centres of Muslim learning'. Sultan Iltutmish (d. 1236) was such a big devotee of the Khwajah, that he built the famous Qutub Minar in Delhi to perpetuate his memory. But even then the Saint declined to accept the Sultan's offer of the high office of *Shaikh-ul-Islam*. This [was the saint who died in a state of ecstasy, when the Qawal (religious singer) recited the verse : "Those who are slain by the dagger of submission (to the will of God)/To them new life returns from the Unknown, at every moment of Time". Remembering this verse and the role of the Saint, it is a strange mystic coincidence to recollect that at the time of the Hindu-Muslim carnage following the partition of India in 1947-48, it was to the mausoleum of this Saint of Delhi that Gandhiji had gone to pray, barely a week before his own martyrdom, which has given a new poignancy to the verse that reverberates within a new secular paraphrase, something to suggest that : "Those who are slain in the path of serving mankind/To them immortality is assured with the gratitude of posterity.

Khawaja Qutub had nine successors, among whom the most famous was Baba Fariduddin Masud Gunj Shakar (1175-1265) who moved over to Ajodhyan and died in Pakpattan. Baba Farid, as he is popularly known was an extreme ascetic, who abjured company and popularity, and preferred solitude and contemplation. He firmly advised his followers : "Do not make friends with Kings and Nobles. Consider their visits to your home as fatal for your soul", and this despite the great reverence in which Sultan Balban (d. 1287) held him. His *Khanqah* became the refuge of scholars including Hindu Yogis and destitutes. He made a deep impression on the Bhakti saints particularly Sant Kabir and Guru Nanak,

the two founders of the Kabir-Panthi sect and the Sikh religion, respectively. So deep was his influence on Nanak, that the slokas (*varses*) of Baba-Farid have been incorporated in the Holy book of the Sikhs, *Guru Granth Sahib*, and have been sung now in the Sikh temples for the last five hundred years. He is regarded as the first Punjabi poet of Sufism, although he wrote in Persian, Arabic, apart from in Punjabi and other local dialects.

Of his five well-known successors, the name of Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia of Delhi (1236-1325 evokes the greatest admiration. Born in Badaun, after spending few years with his teacher at Ajodhyan he returned to Delhi where he dominated the spiritual scene for nearly 60 years. He is recognised by many as 'the greatest Indo-Muslim saint of all times', who survived the ups and downs of three dynasties and seven Sultans, without ever visiting a durbar, which he thought was beneath the dignity of a true Sufi. Yet he had a great fondness for Amir Khusrau, the mystically inclined aristocrat, a versatile genius, who used to spend his days with the Sultans and nights of devotion at the Khanqah of Nizamuddin Aulia. It is in his poems and odes, sung over the centuries by the Qawwals (religious singers) that Saint Nizamuddin figures prominently.

Shaikh Nizamuddin's liberal and tolerant outlook, offended the orthodox mullah but helped the spread of his message throughout the country and gained for him the popular title, *Mahboob-i-ilahi* (the beloved of the God). The tomb in Delhi, built over his grave by Sultan Mohmamud bin Tughlaq, (despite the Saint's wish: "I want no monument over my grave; lay me to rest in broad and open plain") remains even after six and half centuries that had seen the rise and fall of mighty empires, and the destruction and rebuilding of the city of Delhi several times over, a constant point of pilgrimage, and of massive congregation of people of all castes and creeds, Hindus and Muslims.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Aulia's successors spread throughout the country—one to Jhansi, another to Gulbarga, a third to Bengal, and two remained in Delhi, of whom Shaikh Nasiruddin Mahmud (d. 1356), who was later known as *Chirag-i-Delhi* (the lamp of Delhi) was a charismatic saint, whose 100 'Conversations' (as reported in *Khairul Majalis*) reflected melancholy at the state of affairs in social and economic life, caused by political upheavals, bad administration, price rise and general anarchy. 'Happiness', however he reminded, "is only found in the house of the voluntary poor (*faqir*). There is of course sorrow and sadness also in this, but that is due to the search for Truth (*Haq*), not due to the affairs of

this world. Consequently this sadness, leads to spiritual joy and delight". "The Prophet", he said, 'was a man of prolonged sadness and deep reflection".

With the death of *Chirag-i-Delhi*, the first phase of Chisti Silsilah ends. One of his successor was Syed Muhammad Gesu Daraz (d. 1421) who went to Gulbarga in Karnataka in the South, at the time when the great Bhamani Sultanate (1347-1484) was established by Hasan Gangu Bhamani in 1347. Syed Gesu Daraz was a prolific writer of over 30 books on *Tasawwuf* (Mysticism). His love for the poor and the lowly and his defence of the rights of man earned him the title of *Bandanawaz* (benefactor of God's Creatures). He was one of the early poets and writers in the Urdu language—a new language that had grown as a synthesis of the Persian, Turkish and Arabic on the one hand and of the Indians dialects khariboli, Braj and Punjabi on the other, with its base in Sanskrit syntax and etymology drawn from many sources. His famous couplet that reflect the crede of the mystic and bhakti, was one of the first specimens of Urdu poetry. The impeccable couplet is : Infidelity is welcome to the infidels and Islam to the Shaikh/But to us lovers, love and the content and hermony of our hearts is enough.

Now let us have a glimpse of the neo-Bhakti wave of consciousness, that had developed in the thirteenth century and lasted till the end of the 18th century, as a complementary development and interactive movement to the spread of Muslim Sufi traditions.

The dominant syncretic trend and humanistic thought in India had seldom been manifest more clearly and profoundly than in the *Slokas* and *bhajans* of the *Bhakti* saints, poets and singers. The first period of the Bhakti movement culminated between 7th and 12th centuries A.C. as a revolutionary response to the decadence of Buddhism and Jainism, that had earlier held sway also in the South. With the proliferation of saintly hymn-makers of Tamilnadu, the celebrated *Adiyars* (Saiva saints) and the *Alvars* (Vaishnava saints), the Bhakti cult had a resurgence, which later challenged even the theoretical formulations of Sankara, while the movement began in the Pallava time (7th century A.C.) it spread in the reign of the Rashtrakutas and Eastern Chalukyas (9th century A.C.) and continued in the time of the Imperial Cholas (10th & 11th centuries A.C.) in the southern part of the Indian peninsula.

The second mighty upsurge of the Bhakti cult swept the whole of the Indo-Gangetic plain, from the 13th to the 18th centuries, covering more than twelve linguistic-cum-culture zones of the sub-continent, namely the

Braj, Bhojpuri, Khariboli and Maithili sub-regions of U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, the Kashmir, the Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Sindh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bengal and Assam.

The names of the more famous Bhakti-yogis and poets (whose number might well have been over a hundred) are as follows : (Hindi belt) (i) Ramananda (1400?-1470); (ii) Vidyapathi (1350-1450); (iii) Kabir (1440-1518); (iv) Tulsidas (1532-1623); (v) Surdas (1479-1534); (vi) Rahim (Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan) (16th Century); (vii) Raskhan (17th century); (viii) Nazir Akbarabadi (1735-1846); (Maharashtra): (ix) Namdeva (1270-1350); (x) Eknath (1548-1600); (xi) Tukaram (1598-1649); (xii) Ramdas (1600-1681); (Gujrat): (xiii) Narsimha Mehta (1414-1481); (xiv) Akho (1615-1675); (Bengal): (xv) Chaitanya (1485-1533); (Rajasthan): (xvi) Dadu (1554-1603); (xvii) Mirabai (1547-1614) (Punjab); (xviii) Guru Nanak (1469-1539); (xix) Guru Arjan (1563-1606); (xx) Guru Gobind (1666-1708); (xxi) Bullhe Shah (1680-1758); Sindh : (xxii) Shah Abdul Latif (18th Century); (Assam); (xxiii) Sankaradeva (1449-1558).

Their main thrust was to bring ancient wisdom to the common-folk, by the message of love and amity couched in religious diction, which went home. The song of Narsimha Mehta (d. 1481) defining a true Vaishnava (Men of God)—one of the most favourite hymns used by Gandhiji in his prayer meetings—captures the ethos of the Bhakti idea :

“He is a true Vaishnava (Man of God) who feels the sufferings of others as his own/Ever ready to serve others who are in misery, but never proud of the good turn so done/He bows to all and despises none; is always restrained in word, thought and deeds/Blessed is the mother of such a one, who reveres the wife of another as a mother to himself/He is equinamous and never speaks an untruth and never touches anyone’s wealth/He is above desire and attachment/Ignorance never overpowers him. His mind is full of the strong sense of detachment/Ever in tune with the name of God (Rama) and, as such, all the places of pilgrimage reside in his body/He is free from greed, deceit and fraud and is without passion and anger/This is the true Vaishnava/Narasimha says : Even a sight of such a man is enough to save seventyone generations from hell”.

Most of the Bhakti saints attempted to harmonise the orthogenetic and the heterogenetic elements of the Great and the Little Traditions of both Hinduism and Islam. Their integrative approach generated an ethos of inter-group cordiality. But more than their poetry and bhajans (religious songs), what made an abiding impression on the poor, illiterate or

semi-literate mass of people, comprising the peasant, the craftsman, the artisan, the trader, the village teacher, the small and middle functionary in services etc., was just their lives and life-styles. They lived what they preached. And precept had a lasting impression for those who came in contact, than the principles that were enunciated. After all they were not propounding a complex philosophy. Their direct, simple teaching in folk dialects and folk idiom, that human fraternity is one and indivisible and hence should live in peace, with understanding, toleration and compassion despite apparent cleavages and varied imagaries of religion, of culture, regarding God and truth and good life and social ethics, etc., went straight to the heart of the common people. The Bhakti saints became transmitters of the values of composite culture. They served the historic role, in that age of the dominance of religion as the axial principle of social life, of shifting the focus from doctrinal polemics, sometimes fought through physical combats and inter-group feuds, to the more enduring exercise of mutual appreciation and reciprocal respect for the traditions and customs prevalent among different sects, castes and communities. To have raised their voices against established and entrenched orthodoxy, brahmanic monopoly of knowledge, rigid caste hierarchy and social fragmentation, exclusive use of Sanskrit for rituals, learning and culture; was itself an act of revolutionary dissent and break-through which paved the way at the ideational level, for the unfolding of the pattern of composite culture.

Representative Pioneers of Composite Culture in India :

The six most illustrious representatives of composite culture of India spanning four centuries of the mediaeval age and two of the modern, are Amir Khusrau (13th-14th century), Sant Kabir (15-16th century). Guru Nanak (15-16th century) and Prince Dara Shikuh (17th century), and Raja Rammohan Roy (19th century) and Jawaharlal Nehru (20th century). They epitomized in their personalities and in their intellectual pursuits the *weltanschauung* of acculturation and endogenous creativity. In a sense they are archetypal specimen of intellectual innovators who by sheer genius and vision had not only subsumed in their consciousness the elements of the Great and the Little traditions of their own time but also imbibed as it were, the process of their own specific orthogentic change while simultaneously internalizing heterogenetic influences in a pattern of new cultural syncrretism. In other words, they reached out beyond the confines of their own ascriptive beliefs, value-orientations and cultural norms, to search, to find, and to appropriate from apparently exotic and exogenous sources, elements that could contribute to otherwise plural

society. Without rejecting their own Great Traditions wholesale, they on the contrary with self-assurance and freedom of action interfused it with the growing, and regionally varied Little Traditions of folk life.

The first four representing the mediæval age in its different centuries and epochs, different political climate and Dynastic hegemony, also represent different social status and station in life. In a situation of feudal tyranny, social intolerance, abject submission and conformism to the ethos of dominant culture, their quest for a different moral order was at once arresting heroric. With the variety in their familial origins, ascriptive bondages and the peculiar chains they were out to break, the inherited icons that they destroyed, it was a measure of their commitment and concern that they with courage and fortitude sought to transcend the limitations inherent in their respective background in order to affirm faith in universal brotherhood and against dogmatic fragmentation. This was indeed a great testament of humanism and love.

Amir Khusrau who lived by his wits and versatality, survived one of the most difficult anarchic and politically unstable period in the history of India. Part luck, part wisdom and a tenacious capacity to wriggle his way through the vicissitudes of life, spared him a tragic end. But Prince Dara could not but be a martyr, because a Prince aspiring for the imperial throne could not have afforded the luxury of intellectual liberality tempered with secular outlook and personal involvement in learning and mysticism, at the expense of necessary tactical manoeuvres to keep power groups, and orthodox Mullahs on his side. His departure in the realm of ideas was too bold for his age to reconcile, and certainly not palatable to his ideological opponents led by his ambitious brother Aurangzeb, who were also politically strong and militarily more skilful.

Kabir, a weaver born in a society of the handloom-handicraft makers, both Hindus and Muslims, living amidst the yogis, faqir and sanyasis of Banaras, and Nanak with his rural Punjab background, being the son of a village accountant, with a brother-in-law as a store-keeper in the house of a Muslim feudal aristocrat, and himself briefly a minor functionary in Afghan administration, represent jointly folk-culture at its most sensitive point of cultural creativity.

Raja Rammohun Roy, a Bengali Brahmin steeped in the traditional lore of Vedantic wisdom, exposed to the Sufi traditions of Islam and the apisthenology of Persian-Arabic literature that was the guiding source for the cultural elite of the times, was one of the early pioneer of endogenous creativity for modernisation in India. Jawaharlal

Nehru, remains by far the most dominating figure in the National Liberation Movement of India, a scintillating mind attuned to Asian awakening and global concerns, and above all as the embodiment of India's and the Third World's quest for democracy, rationalism, scientific temper, secular polity and socialist impulses of equality, justice, and world peace.

The ideational commonality in the six of them, divided by centuries but united by vision and compassion can be perceived in their transcendental passion to overcome the prejudices of their caste, class and creed and reach out to all sections of their fellowmen and women with equal love and loyalty in order to promote the composite culture in India. Indeed it is this composite culture of India which remains a valuable input into the flowering of a new world of creative diversity which is united by larger humanistic concerns, for building a new civilization on this planet based on justice, equality, dignity and universal prosperity.

The Challenge of Building A Composite Culture

Wahid is Malik

INDIA has been rightly called the epitome of world for there is scarcely anything, anywhere, in the world that is not to be found in small or large measure in India. Viewed in its geophysical contour, India presents climate, terrain, flora, fauna and minerals in all their myriad and varied forms. The climate of the country varies from the very hot to the very cold regions. There are also the temperate zones. India has certain areas which receive the highest rainfall, and there are also such regions as witness much less rainfall; certain valleys, embossomed in the Himalayas, pass through periods of heavy to mild snow-falls during winter. The people of the plains have a different experience. The Indo- Gangetic valley possesses richest soil while close by is the desert of Rajasthan, which human endeavour, combined with science and technology, is converting into a fertile, arable and habitable belt by means of canals and the power generated from the water tamed and controlled by man.

India is a vast land mass, with world's most far-reaching mountain-chains called the Himalayas which have been, since time immemorial, acting as her screen and rampart in the north. It has these mountain chains which can boast of possessing the highest peaks of world like Mount Everest. These mountain-chains, stretching from Iran in the West to the province of Yunnan in south China, halt the water-laden clouds rising from the Indian ocean and the Arabian Sea and make them yield a rich harvest of rain and snow. The waters, thus stored up in the mountain hide-outs, find their way through perennial streams which run over and across northern India and enable the man to obtain the rich harvest of crop with little toil. It is this movement of water vapour in a cyclical order between the ocean and the mountain that contains the secret of life and growth of Indian people and of their culture over the ages.

The Ganges is a symbol of this process of life and growth, it is inevitably for this reason that the bulk of Indians have all along looked upon the Ganges as sacred and a source of deliverance. Not for nothing, therefore, did, Pandit Nehru extol the virtues of the Ganges in his testament.

Equally numerous are the biological species in the shape of myriad flora and fauna that a man comes across in different parts of India. Nowhere has the cry for preservation of plant and animal life been raised so vociferously and sincerely as in India. The efforts, that India has been making for some time past, for the maintenance of ecological balance, have been commended and applauded.

Today by itself cannot explain to us the forces that operated ever long past and thereby evolved a people who are race of races, a culture of cultures and a faith of faiths. It is the long process of these historical forces which has brought into being the multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural India, pulsating with many faiths. While these variegated elements and different strands make the life colourful, they do not encumber the growth of unity. These various elements are like different streams flowing down to enter the vast and abyssmal ocean of India, and this process gives her the much talked of *Unity in diversity*. It is not a deram, but a reality and it is this reality which makes Indian people the race of races, culture of cultures and faith of faiths.

Is it a matter of hundred or a thousand years? No, it is not that. Really speaking, the origin of the composite and multi-cultural society of India goes back to those hoary days when the Negroid, the Proto-Australoid; Mangoloid, and the Dravidian engaged themselves in the collective effort of founding a culture that was inevitably composite. The Aryans, who came and joined this milieu, helped only to broaden and deepen the foundations of this composite culture. Obviously, such people would be farther from the truth and surely mistaken in expressing the view that the Aryans and the non-Aryans were for ever engaged in a life and death struggle in which each tried to destroy the culture of the other group.

The advent of the Persian, the Greek, the Saka, the Kushan and even the Hun contributed towards the growth of this composite culture. No doubt some among them like the Hun tried to destroy the existing fabric of life but the life and culture of India was still vigorous enough to resist the onslaught and finally absorb within itself the Hun, who had looked earlier so formidable and incorrigible.

The advent of Turks made a little difference in so far as they looked like another ocean. But these Turks with their faith in Islam adopted India as their home. Before long, men who were really thoughtful, imaginative and of true faith in the two streams emerged to establish natural points of contact and fusion between Hinduisim and Islam. Nanak, Kabir, Sheikh Salim Chishti, Hazrat Baba Farid Ganj-Shakkar, Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din Auliya, Dadu, Rajab, Namdev, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sant Tuka Ram, Ram Dass, Meera and Tulsi, each in his own way sang of the unity of God and of man with greater force, conviction and devotion than had been done anywhere else. It was in this context that Nanak and kabir sought to bridge the gulf between the two communities. The efforts of these great saints and reformers at showing the right path and purging society of all ills brought into existence the powerful movements of *Bhakti* with orientation of *Advaita* and Sufism with slant of *Wahdat-ul-Wajud*.

If Ashok in ancient times gave his all to establish the tradition of peace and human love, Akbar did not lag behind in pursuing vigorously the policy of *Suleh-i-Kul* (Peace with all). I hope all of us familiar with this tradition of peace and amity can easily recollect the name of Sultan Zainul-Abidin of Kashmir, whom people, out of sheer love and respect, still remember as *Bud Shah* (The Great monarch) for his policy of proverbial tolerance, peace and amity. Though a staunch adherent of the principles of Islam he was kindest to his non-muslim subjects. He found no contradiction in the two positions. Such thoughtful and humanistic acts of various rulers through ages helped to strengthen and advance the cause of composite culture in India. Dara Shikoh worked as a link in this chain when he compiled his *Majma-ul-Bahren*, (the confluence of two cultures). The leaders of India's fight for freedom had during their days of struggle derived immense inspiration from this past tradition of India. They profited by it. Obviously as policy-makers of free India they could not afford to forget their past, ever so myriad and colourful yet so compact and cohesive. They proclaimed to the world their unshakable faith in the *Panchsheel* (five principles), of which co-existence was the key-stone—India as epitome of the world was giving to this planet of myriad cultures a prescription to sure health and security—and a panacea to all ills.

During these thirty six years of her independent career, India has had to pass through several challenges to her unity and to the very fabric of her composite culture. On the anvil of India's freedom, the country was divided. It bled, but the vivisection of the land was not of common

man's choosing. It was stage-managed by the imperialist master who showed no inclination to abandon the policy of 'Divide et impera' even at the time of his exit. Can such a challenge repeat itself? The imperialist tactics have not ceased to play their nasty role. But free India is vigorous and powerful enough to take any such challenge in the stride. We are subject to none, we have to have faith in our sincere efforts at preserving our national freedom and integrity. We have to ruthlessly and jealously guard our Unity. The history of thirty six years constitutes too small a period in the history of nation, and particularly of a nation whose history goes back to well over three thousand and five hundred years.

The long past of India is replete with examples of the unceasing and relentless effort at preserving and furthering the common heritage of a composite culture, which has more often than not, guided us to build a temple, a mosque, a gurdwara and a church in close proximity. Is it not a fact that Christianity in all its denominations, Islam, Jainism Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism with all its sects are to be found in India alone? Born of the sense of tolerance and mutual respect practised over thousands of years, the composite culture of India will not find its sources of strength wanting or waning.

In fact, we have to find new avenues or strategy to fortify or reinforce the composite culture against challenges that may emerge in times to come. We do have all the potential, enshrined in plenty, in our tradition and, I, as one amongst you, committed to the cause of education would implore the planners and architects of education to provide, in the curricula a place of importance to ethico-spiritual values which have stood the test of times and which, people, even in vindictive times, may find acceptable and full of utility without demur.

The future generation and their growth is our charge. Is it not our bounden duty to put the heads together and put our children along a track of development, that, apart from ensuring an ever bright and prosperous future gives them a faith and hope in the destiny of their composite culture of a nation that is strong and united,

Composite Culture and its Relevance

Krishna Kripalani

I know of no culture that is not composite. There may be, somewhere in a remote and unknown backwood or wilderness, a society that has not known any outside influence, and has in that sense remained singular. But no culture, not entombed in obscurity, can help being composite, for in eduring it must adjust itself to the winds blowing across it, and in the process must absorb something from outside. If it cannot, it must decay and perish. The inevitability of a composite culture needs to be recognised before one discusses the question of its relevance.

Relevance raises a question of values. Has what happened or is happening good and wholesome for the society, or is it pernicious? This cannot be mechanically or automatically determined. It depends on what we make of it.

Relevance is a test and a measure of our capacity to grow by adapting and absorbing. What is alien and even seemingly obnoxious can prove wholesome if we make a creative use of it.

Our country is an outstanding example of both creative and uncreative responses to alien and seemingly hostile influence. Kabir, Guru Nanak and other saint-poets of medieval India as well as the development of our music, the fine arts and architecture testify to a creative response to the impact of Islam and Muslim conquest.

On the other hand, the extreme orthodoxy, be it Hindu or Muslim, which shrank deeper into a shell of unthinking conformism was an uncreative reaction.

The birth of modern India in the early 19th century illustrates this phenomenon vividly and variously. Take Raja Rammohun Roy who was

equally at home in Hindu and Islamic learning. His Muslim friends knew him as a "Zabardast Moulvi". The orthodox of his own Brahmin community reviled him for citing the *shastras* against many of their meaningless rituals and in particular against the inhuman rite of *Suttee*. In the beginning he had a revulsion against the British presence in India, but grew to overcome it and began to study English language and history, as also Christianity, in order to find out for himself, how was it that a handful of foreign *baniyas* from across the seas were able to put their impress on a whole continent.

What was the secret of their success? Could it be mere brute force and treachery? Or was there something much more substantial to it, an intellectual and moral basis which needed to be discovered?

Rammohun's questioning mind could not but explore it. In this quest he came to be steeped in the essentials of all the three great civilizations and religions which have made modern India what it is.

Needless to say, such a daring adventure provoke more enmity than admiration and for a long time, he was looked askance at by his co-religionists as "an enemy of the people". Gradually a grateful nation learnt to honour him as a seeker of truth and a maker of modern India.

In his life and personality were integrated diverse strands—*Hindu Vedantism*, the monotheism of *Islam* and its stress on universal brotherhood, Christian charity and European rationalism. No wonder that Swami Vivekananda described him as "the first man of a regenerate India."

This tradition of creative experiments in the evaluation of a composite culture has continued, however much its characteristics may have varied from time to time. Two examples might be cited. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, celebrated as the ocean of Hindu learning, was no less celebrated for his rationalism, his intellectual integrity and his unwearied crusade for female education and widow remarriage.

In personal life a good Hindu and a model Brahmin, in intellectual sympathies and in moral and social outlook, he was a universal man, as universal as any stalwart of the European renaissance.

Another illustrious example, though in some respects the very antithesis of Vidyasagar, is of Ramakrishna Paramahansa who began his spiritual *Sadhana* in the orthodox Hindu worship of the goddess Kali and discovered at the end, by boldly experimenting with different and seemingly contrary traditions, that the experience of the Universal was basically the same. Thereby he did not ignore or belittle his own religious culture but enriched it with new dimensions.

This "mad man of God", as Romain Rolland described him, was in fact one of the divine seekers.

Indeed, every outstanding personality who has contributed significantly to the making of modern India, since the beginning of the 19th century, has embodied in his make-up a blend of many cultures. Each in his unique fashion. Vivekananda was very different from his Master Ramakrishna, as Rabindranath Tagore was from his hero Rammohun Roy, and both were as different from Gandhiji as Gandhiji was from Jawaharlal Nehru.

And yet they were all equally, and at the same time differently, the products and representatives of a composite culture which is truly Indian because made up of many strands.

Of them all Gandhiji was perhaps the most complex. Very Hindu in some respects, very un-Hindu in some others, very native and of the soil in appearance, very cosmopolitan and universal in spirit, he was a puzzle even to his admirers. The "naked Fakir" was inwardly clothed with more western virtues than Churchill could recognise, virtues which had made Churchill's own people a great nation. Wavell, a honest soldier and presumably a good christian, found Gandhiji "malevolent", as he recorded in his diary, and failed to see how near Gandhiji's spirit was to that of Jesus.

Jawaharlal Nehru was in comparison simple. The many threads of different colours in his cultural and intellectual personality were clearly visible. Unlike Gandhiji, he did not baffle his admirers and critics, but he challenged and provoked comment all the same. Many conservative Hindus deemed him more Muslim than Hindu, and many a devout nationalist found him more English than Indian. Sardar Patel is said to have once jokingly and in the pickwickian sense, described him in a private conversation as India's first nationalist Muslim and the last Englishman left in India. This only showed how well-balanced and blended were the many influences that had gone into Jawaharlal's making, hereditary, environmental, and acquired.

And so we come back to where we started from namely, that a composite culture is inevitable in a living and growing society. Perhaps nowhere more so than in our country which Rabindranath Tagore in a well-known song likened to a vast ocean where the waters of many rivers from many sources meet and mingle.

As regards the relevance of a composite culture, it depends on what we can make of it. Different colours may make an ugly smudge or a lovely pattern in mosaic. If we accept divergence with sympathy and understanding, we enrich ourselves; if we reject it blindly we impoverish ourselves.

Integration to be real must be creative and must constantly renew itself in fresh awareness. There is no mechanical means to ensure automatic integration, national or any other. There is only one way and that is through wisdom which comes of sympathy and understanding.

The Semiotics of Cultural Integration

Harjeet Singh Gill

THE conceptual framework that encompasses a variety of cultural and religious undercurrents is basically a framework of complementation and congruency. This basic proposition which correlates identical interests in the integrity of the ideal of universal brotherhood and the sanctity of the metaphysical unifying force at the deeper level of mystic realisation has, however, very often been either neglected or has met outright rejection at the hands of those who believe in the fundamental negation of this underlying sanctity in whatever form it may be prevalent.

It is strange and absolutely illogical that those whose only commitment has been to disbelief of and disregard for all religio-cultural patterns have been the vanguard of secularism in our times.

This fantastic proposition of equality by exclusion inherited from the rationalist and the logical positivist formulation goes under the name of secularism and cultural integration. It is unfortunate and intellectually ridiculous to postulate that the one who does not love his own culture will love all. This conceptual opposition of integration by demolishing the basic structures of human interrelations at the level of cultural and social intellection has led to all sorts of incongruent hypotheses and has put forward a group of people who present philosophical parallelism by a series of negative premises of contrasts and competitions.

The implication of their thesis is obvious that one cannot build a new conceptual pyramid on the flimsy dialectics of ethnic collusions.

The present writer would like to submit that ethnic integration and conceptual progression in the historical cultural process can be formulated only in terms of intense mystic realisations and absolutely honest comprehension of the identity of the cultural self. This proposition leads to the inclusion of as opposed to the exclusion of ethnic vagaries and historical mutations.

It is the desire to build and spread that motivates adjustment and rethinking which necessarily end up in conceptual evolution. There is no such thing as static societies and the historical progression is not only due to conflicting class interests. As a matter of fact, most of the early metaphysical movements took place at a time when it is difficult to discern any recognisable economic hierarchy. The cultural compulsions which force conceptual mutations are primarily due to what may be called in simple terms, collective living.

The process of acculturation is the process of cultural discourse or cultural communication that is transmitted and transformed in terms of collective, social living and its ceremonies, rituals social organisation, cultural and religious manifestations. This discourse is a mystic continuum. Its perpetual intensity lies in its supreme authority and purpose.

However, this very unique spiritual discourse has to be realised in the empirical texture of a body of semiotic transformations. It is but natural that each time a new symbolic system is adopted, the system invariably causes a certain amount of conceptual adjustment, if I dare use this word.

With all due respect to the philological puritanists whose efforts in each religious or philosophical tradition are laudable, there is no escape from the anthropological fact that no conceptual framework can withstand the inbuilt connotations of a given expression system. This unconscious but necessary conceptual acculturation has always been brought about by those earnest mystics who indulged in vernacularisation.

The classical languages—Arabic or Sanskrit—set the main contours but when these kernel thoughts, these mysteries of the communicative soul were projected through the local idiom of cultural semiotics whether it was the Muslim Sufis or the Sikh Gurus, the historical progression could not be stopped.

When a Shah Husain employs the correlational opposition of the beloved and the lover, the bride and the bridegroom, the dowry and the

good deeds, the in-laws and the heavens or when a Guru Nanak presents a reverberation of *Karam Khand*, *Saram Khand*, *Dharam Khand*, *Sach Khand* through an imagery never used before in the classical transmissions, there is bound to be a cohesive progression of the correlated cultural channels of the past and the present into a new formulation that is both a continuity and an epistemological cut (coupure).

The philosophical stand of linguistic behaviour is quite obvious. No cultural discourse is possible in a linguistic void. And, the moment a new cover is given to a universal truth, it acquires a new force and a new validity.

Strangely enough, it is the intense desire to remain pure in thought and action that is responsible for new cultural groupings. It is the honesty of purpose and the supreme realisation of spiritual communication that forces these pious men of the spirit to follow the semiotic channels of local customs. And, obviously in such a sincere situation, cultural integration is inevitable.

This configuration is not due to exclusion formulated by those who regard all cultures as of the same texture or for whom there is no difference between one religion or the other—for they care for none—but it is due to the most systematic intellectual exercise of those whose love and respect for their religion and culture are indivisible. This is clear from the very fact that they made tremendous efforts to put forth their philosophical framework but since the texture of this framework had to be different from what they or their fellow thinkers of the past were used to, there had to be a new set of conceptual correlations.

I believe that the Indian cultural integration—or for that matter any cultural integration—is a heritage of such genuine believers of the spiritual realm.

The historians who do not understand the evolutionary process of restructuration jump at the naive conclusions of amalgam and influences. No discourse, cultural or otherwise, is possible with patchwork.

The move to vernacularisation is a move to reach the people through the people's tongue or, in other words, through the medium of people's language, music or art. When one adopts either of these three, there is a natural process of reconstitution of older categories. There is a sort of a rebirth and rejuvenation or, if you will, a certain reactivation—hence one often talks about a specific contribution and an historical progression from a given artistic threshold.

It is precisely for this reason that today the study of folk lore, folk art and ethnomusicology has acquired epistemological importance. One should not envisage this process of restructraction only in medieval India but the adoption of the cowherd god, later named Shiva, and the goddess of fertility, who was given a variety of names and formulations in classical times, and the native hymns and musical notes of the pre-Aryan Bharat point to the same process of continuity and reconstitution.

Strangely enough, even though this creative process begins from the lowest strata of society, the historians always compare the classical, standardised texts where the mutations have already reached the apex of integration. If there is any possibility of tracing the sources of such an evolution, it has to be reconstructed from the most primitive level imaginable.

National identity in a Multilingual Society

B. D. Nagchaudhri

WHILE the legal boundaries and structure of a nation are fairly clear, we are not quite clear what constitutes a nation. Language and culture have often been thought of as two basic constituents that give unity to the structure of a nation. However, there are nations which have neither a commonality of language nor a commonality of culture, like the USSR, China or Yugoslavia, and are still identified as nations. Geographical boundaries are somewhat ephemeral. In the last three hundred years the boundaries of many nations in Europe have been redrawn many times.

The concept of a nation itself is not a fixed or even a clear concept. It arose some four hundred years ago in Europe and has been changing since then. Ashoka's empire in 2300 years ago or the Kushan Kingdoms some four hundred years later, stretched beyond the boundaries of what we now call India and beyond the geographical boundaries of the sub-continent.

However, usually a cultural identity of a nation is often discernible and is probably a significant aspect of nationality. The concept of national integration, therefore, is development of a cultural identity which is composed of different cultural streams. Greece and Italy became nations in the last few hundred years but their cultural identity is old and strong. It is Roman culture that is now identified as Italian culture. However, in the process many streams of different cultures have been incorporated and woven into the texture of Italian culture, so that the Roman, although different from contemporary Italian looms very large, is not the only source. The same can be said of Greece where the culture of Athens and Attica have become the culture of Greece enriched and modified by other sources of Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Assyrian influences.

The general misconception in our country is the equation of religion with culture. We talk of Islamic culture, but there is very little in common between Arab culture and Persian culture or for that matter between Arab culture and Indian culture although all three have strong Islamic components. The cultural traditions of Indonesia and Malaysia have a composite influence of Hindu and Islamic perceptions forged into singular national patterns of art, culture, tradition and thought. Similarly, the concept of Hindu culture is a misconception except in the sense of the culture of Hindustan, the land of the people. The so-called Hindu culture has incorporated many streams from many social systems, the indigenous peoples, the various groups, tribes and races who have come at various times and settled in this country during the last three thousand years or more, many religions, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity as well as many cults and subdivisions of these religions have all contributed to the crazy quilt of our inheritance.

The diversity within what may be called the Hindu fold is such that mutual differences are sometimes larger than the difference between a specific cult and another religion. While we cannot equate religion and culture, elements of religion tend to permeate a culture.

Culture is related to styles of life, the language, the thoughts and bonds of a people. We notice that there are greater differences between Bengali culture and the culture of Tamil Nadu than between Hindu and Muslims cultures of Bengal. While the language and patterns of life bring the different religions of a group of people to appreciate a common cultural life pattern, religion sometimes enriches, sometimes distorts this common cultural pattern.

The concept of a nation today has the connotation of a political unity and geographical boundaries, a single system of government and the equality of all citizens of that nation vis-a-vis the political institutions of that country. This political concept of a nation is perhaps best exemplified by Switzerland, a small country with three or four languages and different cultural streams, still maintaining concept of a unified nationality and resist any imposition of external force, political or economical. One may well ask in what sense is Switzerland a nation. The only serious answer is perhaps 400 years of history and the strong sense of bond between the citizens and their government.

India's search for a national identity is comparatively brief in the modern connotation of a national identity. There were periods like the Asokan, Kushan, Gupta and Moghul empires, when a strong central

focus and a sense of centralised organisation identified more or less with the ruler. This identity was fostered by cultural efflorescence and gave rise to new features of community life which became embedded into our traditions. It is, however, difficult to describe any or all of these four empires as the beginnings of Indian nationality. The concept of nationality and the identity of a people with the nation is too recent a concept. We do draw many cultural features and traditions from the cultural efflorescence of the past empires; but it will be difficult to draw the conclusion from that our national identity derives from those times.

The consolidation of the British power nearly a hundred and fifty years ago brought us in direct contact with the emerging sense of nationhood in Europe and in a certain sense the world over. It was during the British rule that a sense of national identity began to emerge. This was neither coherent nor complete; but it did give a strong base to the struggle for freedom during the last seventy years. In the course of last fifty years, the sense of nationhood and its relation to geographical boundaries became strong only to be shaken quite rudely by the partition of the sub-continent into two nations in 1947. In a sense, the problems of evolving a national identity and the consequent process of a national integration arose from that time. It was in a sense the search for the logic in the process of evolution of a nation.

The question also arose from that time onwards as to how to evolve a stronger national identity in the matrix of a large cultural and linguistic diversity. Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru were three great minds, who approached the search for national identity, each in their own way partly by reason and partly through their emotional sense of rootedness to their common heritage. While Tagore saw a mystical union achieved through the interpenetration of cultures in our history, Gandhi saw a basic cultural unity in social life of rural India within the diverse traditions and cultures of the country. Nehru saw the political identity of India as something that subordinated cultural diversity in the manner of what history of European nations showed him. After independence, the question of political identity has become increasingly stronger. We have discovered that the national identity becomes strongly felt and is reinforced in times of threat. We have noted this particularly in 1962, 1965 and 1971.

The bonds which lead to a political identity became apparent when subjected to threats or perceived danger but this reinforcement of bonds is not cultivated and strengthened in the normal activities of the community and sinks below our perceptions most of the time.

Cultural diversity and even more linguistic diversity has been a recurring theme to provide an artificial dichotomy between disparate languages and culture on one side and national identity on the other. National integration is an attempt to resolve the dichotomy. While there are fairly strong positive aspects in such concepts, there are also certain dangerous and negative factors.

One of the most unhappy connotations is an assumption that national integrity is in doubt and has to be cultivated and established by formal means.

The second implication often is that a national identity or its expression will conflict with local or regional or cultural expression.

A third is that cultures are mutually exclusive and each culture demands individual loyalty. These and other often hidden implications are mental traps into which one can fall unless care is exercised. We have seen that strong cultural pressure of one culture or strong linguistic pressure of one language tend to build resistance to it by cultural or regional groups who feel threatened. We have seen examples in French speaking Canada and non Hindi speaking areas of India. We may note that often linguistic group freely accept linguistic or cultural changes which they conceive as advantageous or fruitful. The curious aspect of national identity then is that it is the strongest and takes defensive postures under threat, either of external aggression or internal fissiparousness. Linguistic groups often work well under cooperative 'give and take' between cultures and communities (NEFA-Hindi). It does not work quite as well in encapsulated groups within a nation.

One of the strong bonds within a nation is that of language. It is only natural that in the quest for national identity there will be the promotion of communication, which requires a language of communication between all the people within a nation. Therefore, the quest of a national language is understandable.

Hindi being the language spoken and understood by the largest number of people in the country would tend to assert its claim as the language of national communication and transmission of thoughts. In Russia, a similar problem arose immediately after the October revolution in 1917. The incipient opposition of language groups led Lenin to enunciate the concept of nationalities within the Soviet Union. The nationalities within the Soviet Union were mainly based on the concept of a linguistic region, although cultural identity also played a role in identifying the nation and republic to a large extent.

The coexistence of language and culture in a region were the main criteria in setting up the republic of the Soviet Union. However, many of the republics have smaller language groups within their boundaries. Although highly centralised, the Russian government took a careful attitude of letting each nationality or any language or ethnic group try to evolve its own approach to the problem of all-Union communication. The Soviet Union leadership however showed foresight and patience and humility in trying to make the Russian language more adaptable to the use of other nationalities. As a result some of the nationalities began to use the script even when they did not use the Russian language. In the initial period using the script gave language group access to typewriters, teleprinters, computers, telegraphy and the like. However, the unifying effects of the low profile and slow process have led to a general acceptance of the need of a single script by everybody.

The several languages remain while Russian has steadily become a second language for all USSR. The Russian alphabet is really a modified Greek alphabet which Russia adopted two and a half centuries ago by modifying the Greek alphabet originally by the Greek orthodox church and later on by subsequent historical modifications. The Russian script like the Latin script is not phonemic and therefore the problems of half spacing and diacritical marks do not arise. The Russian alphabet has thus some advantage as the Latin alphabet of being amenable to modern technology. Further by reducing the use of the cases, capital and small, they have improved its technological capability.

In our country, over a large part of our area, we have the advantage of use of phonemic scripts which are almost all alike except that it is written differently in different parts of the country. Not only the scripts are different, the diacritical marks are often different. This makes it very difficult and expensive to use modern facilities such as typewriters, teleprinters, computers and so forth needed by business, industry and technology. On the other hand, for a variety of historical reasons many of the root words are common.

It is not difficult to recognise a number of words spoken in Hindi for Bengali speaking men or for a Hindi or Bengali speaking men to understand Oriya or Assamese. We have not yet exploited these advantages of common root words, the common phoneme in trying to evolve a common script which will be amenable to modern usage, that is without the diacritical marks.

Devnagri has been often proposed. It has not caught on because of the inconvenience of yukaharas, the diacritical marks and the slowness of writing in the script. The same criticism would apply to Bengali, Oriya or Telegu scripts.

It is remarkable to note that China, which has also many languages but only one script, found the existence of so many ideograms a great drawback for its use in the process of modernisation. In the last few years they have been trying steadily and slowly to modernise their written language without losing the ability to use it for communication throughout the country. In the process they wish to keep alive the spirit of language, their culture and enhance progress of science and technology throughout the country.

The Japanese have introduced the phonetic hirakana and kathakana scripts to enhance the growth of the language and these are now in increasing use together with the ideograms. It is generally recognised in both these two great East-Asian nations that the task is essentially scientific and linguistic in character and not political.

Some day, I hope, we shall also try to do something to take advantage of our national advantages and reduce the barriers between the languages of our country. It is a scientific, linguistic and social task and not a political one. One of the reasons of our setbacks has been to try on various occasions to make it a political task.

Many facets of our culture are common throughout the nation. If the barriers of communication are reduced, we shall be taking a further step forward towards a stronger national identity, a better knit scientific and technological society and easier communication between various cultural groups within the nation.

Problems of Nation Building

Dipankar Gupta

I purpose to examine the theory of nation-building in relation to Asia and the so-called "transitional societies." The purpose is to study the relevance and the utility of the established concepts of nation-building for these societies and see how far it helps us in understanding the changes occurring in these countries.

A state may be defined as "a legal concept describing a social group that occupies a defined territory and is organised under a common political institution and an effective government". A nation, on the other hand, is a "social group which shares a common ideology, common institutions and customs and sense of homogeneity.....A nation may comprise part of a state, be co-terminus or extend beyond it."¹ Hence, one of the fundamental tasks of nation-building is the integration of various sub-national and regional groups, enthusing in them an unified identity so that they might "think" of themselves as a nation-state.² This itself is an engrossing problem for almost all the nation-states,³ but is felt most acutely in the developing societies.

I shall first proceed by underlining the main themes proposed by various authors who have worked on this issue and point out some of the more obvious drawbacks of their study. Finally I shall briefly touch upon what I consider to be the most appropriate manner by what nation building and national integration can take place.

1. L. W. Pye, *Politics, Personality and Nation-Building*, p. 334.
2. Walker Connor, Nation building or Nation Destroying? *World Politics*, vol. XXIV, No. 3, April 1972, p. 319.
3. Ibid.

Besides the overwhelming problem of unification in a nation-state as mentioned above, nation-building concerns itself with the generic theme of the effective extension of the nation-state system to all societies.⁴ Nation building therefore deals with the appropriate differentiation of institutional structure e.g. the development of administrative and legal institutions, the development of a rational, scientific and modern spirit (as opposed to a traditional one) and the effective citizenship of those living within the boundaries of the nation. These are the major features of nation-building and hence it is very often used synonymously with political modernisation⁵ and political development.⁶

“Historically”, as Pye says, “there have been many types of political systems, and all communities have had their form of politics, but that with the emergence of the modern nation-state and specific set of requirements about politics came into existenceThe politics of historic empires, of tribe, of ethnic community or of colony must give way to the politics necessary to produce an efficient nation-state that can operate effectively in a system of other nation-states”⁷. Here Pye is emphasizing three aspects: (1) nation-building is a modern concept; (2) earlier forms of politics will not make for efficient management of modern nation states, and (3) “although nation-building is essentially a domestic process it comes about in response to international forces.”⁸

Nation-building is the urge towards replacing a large number of traditional, religious, familial and ethnic political authorities by a single, secular, national political authority. Various scholars have opined that a change of institutions will naturally bring about thorough going changes throughout society. K. Deutch for one, believed that ethnic diversity disappears with the adoption of modern political and institutional structures⁹. This is, in our opinion, a constructing view for it reflects obvious social factors. Bellah, introducing a human approach to start formal structures, believes that nation building in terms of a sudden complete break with the past is patently improbable as the mere adoption of the

4. L.W. Pye. *Aspects of Political Development*, p. 14.

5. In the sense used by Huntington in “Political Modernisation, America vs. Europe”, *World Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1966.

6. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development*, p. 39.

7. Pye, *ibid*.

8. Pye, *Politics, Personality and Nation Building*, p. 39.

9. K. Deutch, Social Mobilisation and Political Development, *U.S. Political Science Review*, September 1961, p. 501.

so-called modern political institutions, for the latter would clearly be incongruous with the prevailing ideological and normative structure of the transitional societies.

The above dilemma brings us to the heart of the cultural bias of the Western authors on nation-building. The interest in nation-building is unfortunately concentrated on the communist countries and the developing nations of the world. It is a tacit assumption on the part of the theorists¹⁰ that the Western European and American nation-states are complete and the problem of nation-building is superficial in these countries. Every nation in my opinion is in the process of building itself, strengthening or perfecting its systems; and at times they are on the threshold of thorough going structural transformations.

The common theme in Pye, Verba, Bellah et al, is the providing of prescriptions for the developing world. Prior to Pye and to some extent, Almond and Powell, ethnocentric bias of the authors of nation-building, political modernisation, etc. was overt and undisguised. The traditional view, because of which Indology and all anthropology suffered, arose out of the lubris of western scholars which posed the European and non-European world as essential incompatibles. The only way they could conceive by which the latter could improve its lot was by adopting the Western European culture, its structure and institutions. Colonialism was crudely justified on this ground.

The dichotomization of the traditional and modern world proceeded from Maine and Toennies to Parsons and Bendix. Their thrust has been to portray the liberal democratic systems (conceived as ideal types)¹¹ superior to other forms of government. And their fire power is largely concentrated on the Communist countries whose one-party system¹² and regulated

10. This is true for Verba, Pye Almond and Coleman, et al. I am unaware of any nation-building concern of these and other theorists concerning West Europe or U.S.A.

11. David Apter in *Politics of Modernisation* discusses 3 systems, the mobilisation, reconciliation and autocratic. They are in nature of ideal types but Apter sees them as empirical generalisation. The autocratic and the mobilisation systems by virtue of Apter's culture bias are compared unfavourably with reconciliation system. The 3 systems are ideal types in the sense that they represent a one-sided accentuation of characteristics.

12. Harowitz writes that the number of parties does not necessarily determine the presence or absence of democracy, to generalise and see certain institutions as of natural indices of a behavioural norm is of ultimate in ethnocentric antricism. p. 316. Tinkle and Gable, *Political Development and Social Change*.

economy they aspire to discredit. This is a well-known theme and needs no elaboration¹³. Many of the authors have realized that there is both a functional and an institutional content to nation-building¹⁴. They eventually end up in favour of prevailing institutions in the West for tackling the emergent functions of nation-states. The institutional approach therefore poses the problem of dichotomously, though some current authors such as Cartwright, Blondel, etc. disagree with this and pose seemingly a continuum instead.

Lucian W. Pye sought to effect a break with this cultural bias. He says that the new nation-states need not necessarily conform to our methods, but should follow practices more in tune with their own traditions.....” And this should not mean that they are incompetent to realize the Western European standards¹⁵. But it must also be made clear that the so-called “Western European standards” need not be the standards towards which the developing nations aspire to in toto. It has been realized by Lerner¹⁶, that the rising expectations and frustrations of the people of the underdeveloped states fashion not only the institutions capable of development but also their ideals and norms. Nation-building is not a simple unilinear process of ringing out the old and ringing in the new.

The aim of the new nation states is not to attain Western political structures but the generation of economic progress and self-sufficiency for both domestic and international reasons. The modern industrial system therefore necessitates grappling with older, traditional structures. But this does not mean the transposition of full-blown Western structures and institutions into the developing nation-states. Barrington Moore¹⁷ has shown how even in Western Europe, modern democratic politics and industrialization did not follow identical paths. The current developments in the USSR and the USA indicate the validity of the proposition that nation-building and economic development can be attained under different sociological environments.

The posing of models is incorrect for yet another reason. No nation state is thoroughly modern in the sense of complete rationality, pure differentiation of structures, etc. characterizing the political, administrative and

13. C.P. Bhambri

14. Blondel—*Comparative Government*

15. Pye—*Politics, Personality*, *op cit* p. 6.

16. D Lerner *The Passing of Tradition*.

17. Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*.

bureaucratic institutions. As Almond himself has stated all political systems are mixed ones in the sense the traditional patterns coexist with the modern ones and what is more, modern social systems, even the most advanced ones, would be dysfunctional without them. Arthur J. Brodbeck and Lazarfield have studied how personal relations play an essential role in American political behaviour¹⁸. This factor has been elaborated in Merton's conceptual scheme of middle-range theories¹⁹. As a matter of fact complete adherence to bureaucratic formality and political nationality can be dysfunctional for the system²⁰. Therefore as pye says that once it is recognized that political and social development involve more than just the form of relationships defined in terms of their functional relevance for an organisation, then the problems become largely those of understanding the people, their situations and what they aspire towards²¹.

Almond and Coleman with their book *Politics of the Developing Areas*, brought greater precision to the study of comparative governments as Blondel rightly comments²². They broke away from the comparison of rigid structures and institutions with the structural functional approach derived from Lolcott Parsons.

Though the study in terms of system is vulnerable to the criticism that is traditionally heaped on the functionalists. The work of Almond and Coleman brought a certain degree of sophistication in their approach if not in their conclusions. The study of functions can conceivably lead us away from constricting structures and hide-bound ethnocentrism. But Almond and Coleman can be faulted on several counts when we apply their work to the study of nation building.

- (i) The list of functions may be extended to include many more. This is because there is no underlying criterion for having selected those 6 specific systems; and
- (ii) after having made a breakthrough with systems he ironically reverts back to structures when he studies the "capabilities" of certain systems to perform the functions. He decides, finally, in favour of the US-pluralist polity which he deems the most capable.
- (iii) the functions referred to are too general for effective comparison. And, moreover, they deal with the political structure alone.

18. Pye *Politics Personality op cit* p. 37.

19. R.K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*

20. Chester I Bernard, quoted by Pye in *Politics, Personality*, p. 39.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 80

22. J. Blondel, *Comparative Government*, p. xviii.

Further, this political structure of Almond and Coleman's as Blondel rightly points out develops from natural norms²³. In other words, Almond and Coleman take the western norms to be 'naturally' modern, democratic and scientific and therefore this model suffers badly when it has to deal with "imposed norms" of a kind we find in transitional societies. In the case of India and China especially, this is a relevant point to remember. Thus the structural functional model is also prey to ethnocentrism though it would seem that there is nothing inherent in the model to make it so.

For nation-building each nation would have a different set of imperative functions and quite naturally different structural institutions and methods to accomplish them. In a "mobilization system"²⁴ the norms and values are supplied by the political leadership and these are self-consciously generated, from the top. This is not quite in keeping with A. and C's model. The processual aspects of the model confine the dynamic element to within the system. The interest articulation and aggregation functions depicted by A. and C. and by various other authors on pressure-groups politics are applicable only when the state and society are in equilibrium, where the "social processes generate political processes which become the inputs and make demands on the governmental processes which constitute the outputs"²⁵. In transitional societies the elements enforcing dynamism and change are generally from the top and the norms are aggregated from outside the system. The government in these countries plays the role of the vanguard in relation to the rest of the society. In China for instance, the functions of bureaucrats, legal-experts, administrators, in short of the intelligentsia and scientific elite are quite apart from what may be visualized of their counterparts in the West. The complete differentiation in terms of political, scientific and technical is absent in many of the transitional societies. This should not at any rate cast aspersion on the viability of its political structure. The elites of China are exhorted to play a more dynamic role and are ideologically equipped to go beyond the range of their professional competency.

I therefore come down to the fundamental question. What are the peculiarities of Nation-building in the underdeveloped countries and to what degree commonality exists between the Nation-building efforts between the advanced and the third world for instance India?

23. Ibid, p. xxxi.

24. D. Apter, *Politics of Modernization*.

25. Pye, op. cit., p. 43

One must admit that the Asian countries are late comers in the family of modern nation states. And it must also be recognized that in the configuration of international forces nation-states are bound to be a common feature. But as the creation of nation-states is a small step towards Nation-Building what are the more relevant and consequent steps to follow ?

The problem in underdeveloped countries like India, is the problem of releasing of productive forces of producing surplus which can be reinvested for industrial and economic development. The need of the day is to wipe out the 'filth of medievalism'. On the other hand the advanced Western European world has come to its present stage of development because of thoroughgoing transformation in their entire socio-economic structure, though they may have taken different routes to it. The economies of these advanced Western European countries are able today to be complacent of having solved their nation building problems (though this is more alleged than true) because their socio-political institutions are integrated in a monolithic order of capitalistic economy. But in spite of this the contradictions of state monopoly capitalism have surfaced, and the confidence of the Western scholars in the infallibility of their institutions is rudely shaken.

But coming down to Asia and especially India we find even on a purely superficial examination, the existence of a multiplicity of economic formations which do not allow monolithic socio-political structures e.g. two party system as in the West which is wildly bandied about by nation building Theorists. The advocacy of such structures would be against the interest of a large mass of people, and would be tantamount to foisting alien institutions which will not truly reflect the aspirations of the people. The reexamination of the concepts of nation building should be primarily seen in this light, not as Pye etc. have been benignly espousing, i.e. of coopting traditional structures into the modern ones. We have seen how this policy has led to ruthless improvisation and castration of the toiling millions in Africa and Asia down colonial history till today.

Secondly India is a country composed of different nationalities within a single political system. Nation building is a process while a nation ipso facto is not—it is an entity. A nation state comprises of a number of nationalities and cultures. The problem is therefore of finding a harmonious process whereby different nationalities may coexist and prosper within a single state. The concern therefore should be for nation state building. That can be done by admitting that as the great masters

like Marx, Weber and Durkheim have taught us, to remove economic unevenness in the society. As long as this remains an essential character of our economic structure, national sentiments and parochial patriotism are bound to be ignited, detrimental to the welfare of a large mass of the people of this country.

It is to the problems of economic unevenness and multiplicity of economic structures that we should primarily address ourselves to in the context of nation building. Therefore notions of cultural integration and nation building which do not undertake an analysis of the concrete are bound to be futile, and its recommendations fiddled in the given situation.

The area where a certain uniformity can be posited in the efforts towards nation-building in both the developed and underdeveloped world, is the area of economic activity and that for a true integration of various nationalities in a nation state, there should be a determined effort to remove unevenness and inequatability in the economic sphere. Only when such an effort is made, the other dimensions of nation building i.e. the development of compatibility between various nationalities, and the appreciation of diverse cultures can take place.

New national ethos needed

Radhey Mohan

Culture is neither a set of values, symbols and myths nor merely performing arts and literature as generally understood. It is a pattern of living, dynamic and variable, an enormously potent and influential tool which societies adapt to their changing environment.

India, with a long and chequered history of 5,000 years, has been subject to varied civilisational influences with builtin tensions and conflicts deeply rooted to their socio-economic structures. There have been periods in Indian history when two or more civilisations simultaneously co-existed, each influencing the other by intreaction. The coming together of these civilisations initially generated fresh tensions and conflicts but in time disparate elements were harmonised and in this process evolved certain common denominators which acted as unifying force. But divisive factors having their origin in social economy gear themselves to further their designs employing sometimes the language of idealism and the other even of radicalism to camouflage their identities.

In the pre-modern period, Indian culture was evolved out of confrontation and then synthesis of various streams. First the Aryan and Dravidian culture co-existed and latter comingled. The coming of Islam with its own well-defined and developed cultural traits posed the first serious challenge to this process. How the Sanskrit civilisation that existed in the country and the Islamised Turko-Iranian one that came with the new rulers, interacted makes fascinating historical study. It is also worth asking whether the synthesis that was sought of these two streams was integral, or was it more or less peripheral leaving large masses outside its purview seething with their own tensions which became the spring-boards for separateness later?

The Mughal empire at its best was the symbol of a secular approach. If we direct some of our questions at its success or failure to achieve this.

we will have the answers to questions that nag us even today. For Instance, we all know that Akbar's attempts to proclaim a new religion of eclectic origin proved to be a failure. Is it because both cultural and political power were at that time confined to a small aristocracy or birth, whether among the Hindus or Muslims? To go back, one may also ask why the Buddhist attempt to promote a religion (and a whole cultural environment), nay a movement of protest against Brahmanism, around rational approach of moderation in life (as against Brahministic asceticism), failed in this country while it migrated successfully abroad. Nor was the other protest movement, Jainism, with its non-casteist approach successful in displacing Brahmanism. Today we often take it for granted that economic changes like industrialisation will break down cultural and social barriers, eliminate cultural tensions and weld a single cultural out of diverse elements. If this were true, there should have been no separatist Scottish movement in Britain.

Another assumption glibly made is that India has a capacity for unity in diversity and that just as it absorbed the Aryans and Dravidians into its mainstream in early times and the Huns and Scythians much later, the process of synthesis would be at work as a secular process without much of a conscious effort on our part. Do these assumptions hold the ground? Do they not form a barrier against a conscious formulation of the uniting elements in the culture or cultures and the creation of a composite culture?

The process of economic growth itself could, on the other hand, create new problems in cultural integration. It is natural for groups of people to clamour for a larger slice of the national cake, the intensity of the clamour in inverse proportion to the size of the cake. If this assumption is valid, we must be prepared to face the fact that we would have to meet an era of heightened cultural tensions during the period the country is preparing to take off. This is more so where the economic classes are less predominant than cultural social classes or castes. In direct proportion to the pressures for larger slice of the economic cake will be the political pressures built around cultural groups. All these tensions would lead to stressing the exclusiveness of cultures—and retard the process of integration.

A major cause of cultural tension has always been the elitist system of political power. Nowhere perhaps in the world is there such a large gulf between the elite and the masses as in India. The political elite, high

ranking officers, university professors, managerial class—are largely products of English education, and by fostering English medium education which by its expensiveness is an exclusive privilege of this elite, it is able to hold on to power despite the upward pressures that must prevail from the masses in our functioning democracy. Those among the underprivileged who have climbed up the ladder are getting alienated from their own people and are only eager to identify with the cultural group of the existing elite,

Yet the composite culture in which we often take pride, is restricted to this elitist class. At first the elite was brought together by Islamic culture and inter-culturing between the Sanskrit cultural dominant majority and the Persian cultural dominant minority took place for the sake of better enjoyment of the benefits of power for both. When English became the passport to the power structure, first the Sanskrit cultural element and then the Persian soon took to English education. Their interests merged and so too their cultural lives.

The problems of taking whatever composite cultural has been evolved by the elite to the masses are unique. It is obvious that involvement of the people as a whole in a cultural change alone will make it abiding and serve our national goals. This involvement can be promoted by reforming the educational system mobilising the power of the media and conscious choices of those cultural strands which appeal to the masses in preference to those of the classes. For this socio-cultural rather than political history can be a better guide.

Caste has probably been the most significant and abiding factor in our cultural pattern. Its psychological influence is bound to prevail even in future. If we recognise caste as the major hurdle to evolving a composite cultural pattern in which there will be democratic participation as well as expression, the caste system will have to be attacked at source to defuse its tensions. Sociologists, psychologists and cultural pundits must find an answer to the question whether we can find some form other than caste to satisfy man's urge or group urges for preserving identity in a general scheme of things.

Language has also been a barrier in mutual communication, which has built in exclusiveness and raised tensions, both political and other. Could conscious promotion of multi-linguism cut across this.

A new impediment is the hiatus between the urban and rural cultures which tends to grow with industrialisation. Urban society is more open and

more amenable than the rural one. Neo-cultural irridentists who claim that westernisation only is the final answer to our fragmented existences and have adopted or advocated western cultural forms have posed another challenge. It is projected as the new internationalism embracing in its sweep the entire world. Cultural internationalism or simply western cultural models are bound to have an impact on us as the world shrinks more and more. Our enquiry should therefore, also include a consideration of this impact and how far it will help in resolving our own inherent tensions.

We should not be aiming at cultural uniformity when we refer to cultural integration. Cultural diversity should not be discounted. The problem is to ensure that cultural diversity does not result in sub-national feelings which of course is not merely a function of cultural policy but the nature of our cultural polity also.

Implications of the Sex Ratio In Indian Population

Asok Mitra

THE steadily deteriorating ratio over the last one hundred years and particularly since the beginning of the current century of females to males in the Indian population has been the subject of much speculation and investigation. In this discussion the word sex ratio will be used to denote the number of females per 1000 males of any particular population. When the censuses began in the second half of the last century, the deficit of females was, not without plausibility, attributed to incomplete enumeration in the first few censuses, particularly in the northern and north-western regions of the country. It must however be borne in mind that right when the first non-synchronous series of the censuses was taken, Bengal (which then included Bihar and Orissa) showed a ratio of 1001 females to 1000 males, while Mysore showed a ratio of 994 and Madras 990. The Central Province of those times showed a ratio of 965. These were all higher than the accepted probable sex ratio at birth of between 960 and 930.

The region of modern Uttar Pradesh showed a ratio of 875 while Oudh showed 928 and Punjab, which then included the whole of modern Punjab, Haryana and Pakistan, showed a sex ratio of 835. That incomplete enumeration of females may have been responsible for the depleted sex ratio in the early censuses is dramatically brought out in the following table.

Table 1

Sex Ratios of Selected States from One Census to Another

1971	1961	1951	1941	1871/72 to 1971 1931	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881	1871/72
1 Kerala (1019)	Kerala (1022)	Kerala (1028)	Orissa (1053)	Orissa (1067)	Orissa (1086)	Bihar & Orissa (1043)	Bihar & Orissa (1047)	Bihar & Orissa (1040)	Bihar & Orissa (1024)	Bengal (1001)
2 Orissa (989)	Orissa (1001)	Orissa (1022)	Kerala (1027)	Tamil Nadu (1027)	Tamil Nadu (1029)	Madras (1023)	Madras (1029)	Madras (1023)	Madras (1021)	Mysore (994)
3 Tamil Nadu (979)	Bihar (994)	Tamil Nadu (1007)	Tamil Nadu (1012)	Kerala (1022)	Kerala (1011)	CP & Berar (1008)	CP & Berar (1019)	Cochin (998)	Cochin (1007)	Madras (990)
4 Andhra Pr. (977)	Tamil Nadu (992)	Bihar (990)	Bihar (996)	Bihar (994)	Bihar (1016)	Cochin (1007)	Cochin (1004)	Mysore (991)	Travancore (1006)	CP (965) Berar(935)
5 Mysore (959)	Andhra Pr. (981)	Andhra Pr. (986)	Andhra Pr. (980)	Andhra Pr. (987)	Andhra Pr. (993)	Travan- core (981)	Travan- core (981)	CP & Berar (985)	Bengal (994)	Assam (940)
6 Bihar (956)	Mysore (959)	Madhya Pr. (967)	Madhya Pr. (970)	Madhya Pr. (973)	Madhya Pr. (974)	Mysore (979)	Mysore (980)	Travancore (982)	Cochin (989)	Bombay (910)
7 Madhya Pr. (943)	Madhya Pr. (953)	Mysore (966)	Mysore (960)	Mysore (965)	Mysore (969)	Hydera- bad (968)	Hydera- bad (964)	Bengal (973)	CP & Berar (973)	N Prov (875) Oudh(928)

8	Gujarat	Gujarat	Gujarat	Maharashtra	Maharashtra	Central	Bengal	Hydera- bad	Hydera- bad	Punjab
	(936)	(940)	(952)	(949)	(947)	(950)	(949)	(960)	(964)	(835)
9	Maharashtra	Maharashtra	Maharashtra	Gujarat	Gujarat	Gujarat	Bengal	Assam	Assam	...
	(932)	(936)	(941)	(941)	(945)	(944)	(945)	(949)	(942)	...
10	Rajasthan	Uttar Pr.	Rajasthan	Uttar Pr.	Rajasthan	Uttar Pr.	Assam	Central	Bombay	...
	(919)	(909)	(921)	(907)	(907)	(909)	(940)	(948)	(938)	...
11	Assam	Rajasthan	Uttar Pr.	Rajasthan	Uttar Pr.	Assam	Bombay	Bombay	United	...
	(901)	(908)	(910)	(906)	(904)	(908)	(933)	(945)	Prov.	...
12	West Bengal	J.&K.	Assam	Assam	West Bengal	West Bengal	United	Central	Central	...
	(892)	(878)	(877)	(886)	(890)	(905)	(915)	(937)	India	...
13	Uttar Pr.	West Bengal	J. & K.	J & K	Assam	Rajasthan	Rajputana	Rajpu- tana	India	...
	(883)	(878)	(873)	(869)	(886)	(896)	(909)	(905)	(912)	...
14	J & K	Assam	West Bengal	West Bengal	J & K	J & K	J & K	J & K	Rajpu- tana	...
	(882)	(876)	(865)	(852)	(865)	(870)	(887)	(884)	(891)	...
15	Punjab*	Punjab	Punjab	Punjab	Punjab	Punjab	Punjab	Punjab	J & K	...
	(874)	(864)	(858)	(850)	(830)	(821)	(817)	(850)	(880)	...
	INDIAN	939	946	945	950	945	954	963	(844)	...
				(935)	(940)			958	(850)	...
								954	954	940

*Includes Haryana and Chandigarh

The table shows that, on the assumption that there was little differential improvement in medical and public health facilities for females vis-a-vis males and on the further assumption that famines and epidemics were not severely male selective, the enumeration of females in the Indian Census perhaps steadily improved in many parts of the country in the next few censuses. The following table abstracted from Table 1 shows for selected provinces or states the census up to which the enumeration of females may have improved as reflected in the higher observed sex ratios.

Table 2

Selected Provinces and States showing the Year up to which the Sex Ratio Improved from One Census to Another before Registering Declines in the Censuses thereafter.

Province/State	Census year of highest sex ratio
1. Bihar & Orissa (1047)	1901
2. Orissa (1086)	1921
3. Madras (1032)	1911
4. Andhra Pradesh (993)	1921
5. Mysore (980)	1871/72
6. C.P. & Berar (1019)	1901
7. Hyderabad (968)	1911
8. Maharashtra (950)	1921
9. United Provinces (937)	1901
10. Punjab	1901
11. Jammu & Kashmir	1911

Kerala has been steadily improving up to 1951 which, as recent historical studies have shown, has been largely owing to improvements in medical and public health arrangements. As early as 1931 a progressive state like Cochin reported "further, a steady rise in the age of marriage consequent to the rapid progress of education in State and gradual displacement of primitive methods of midwifery by modern and scientific methods considerably reduced the dangers which almost all women have to face and lowered the death rate among young mothers to an appreciative extent. The gradual rise in the sex ratio was but the natural outcome of these improved conditions." A similar reason might have operated in the case of Punjab (including Haryana and Chandigarh) which

steadily improved its sex ratio from 1921 (821 in 1921 to 874 in 1971), but how much of it could be attributed to male outmigration from Punjab has yet to be determined.

We should now have a brief look at the all-India ratios from year to year. Delving into the Central and Provincial census reports and the annual reports on 'the Moral and Material Progress of the People' which were regularly published between 1864 and the early 1930's one finds that the report for 1891 commented on an element of possible underenumeration of females and also on "the real deficiency in the number of females, extending to about the twentieth year, more or less and due to neglect, functional excitement, premature cohabitation and unskilful midwifery." In the comparative absence of famine and disease during the decade the sex ratio increased from 954 to 958. During the decade 1891-1900 the female ratio rose from 958 to 963 for all India. This was attributed to the "relatively high mortality among males in the tracts affected by the great famines of 1897 and 1900." A slight rise in the proportion of females to males at birth was also reported. During the decade 1901-1910 there was a fall in the ratio from 963 to 954. During this decade, in addition to famine, there was plague and malaria. The fall in the ratio was attributed to female mortality from these diseases "which was far in excess of the male deaths from famine." It was also possible that the male deaths were less than in the earlier decade because of timely arrangements of famine relief. The decade 1911-20 showed a decrease in the ratio from 954 to 945. The fall was again due to plague which continued from the previous decades and the outbreak of influenza epidemic which was specially fatal to women and more particularly to young married women. The *purdah* must have played its fateful role in this regard. Since 1921 the sex ratio continues to fall from decade to decade except in the decade 1941-51, in which the partition may have contributed to higher losses and wastage of male lives in certain tracts counterbalancing the continuing diminution of the sex ratio in others.

We may usefully divide India into regions which (a) were well above the average for all-India in all the censuses; (b) were well below the average for India in all the censuses; and (c) states which have hugged close to the all-India average. Table 3 gives the all-India average.

Table 3
Sex Ratio (F/M) for All India 1871/72 to 1971

	1871/82	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
1. Territory as existing at the 1971 census						955	950	945	946	941	932
2. Territory as existing at the 1941 census before partition	940	954	958	963	954	945	940	935			

Table 4 gives the states as now constituted which have been well above the all-India average in all censuses since 1921.

Table 4
States in which the Sex Ratio (F/11) has been well above the All India Average

	Bihar	Orissa	Andhra Pradesh	Tamil Nadu	Kerala	Karnataka	Madhya Pradesh
1921	1016	1086	993	1029	1011	969	974
1931	994	1067	987	1037	1022	965	973
1941	996	1053	980	1012	1027	960	970
1951	990	1022	986	1007	1028	966	967
1961	994	1001	981	992	1022	959	953
1971	956	989	977	979	1019	959	943

It should be noted in passing that Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have been states of chronic outmigration, particularly of males.

Table 5 gives the states which have been well below the average for India in all censuses.

Table 5
States which have been well below the Average for India in
Sex Ratio (F/M).

Year	Assam	West Bengal	Rajasthan	Uttar Pradesh	Punjab incl. Haryana	Jammu & Kashmir
1921	908	905	896	909	821	870
1931	886	890	907	904	830	865
1941	886	852	906	907	850	869
1951	877	865	921	910	858	873
1961	876	872	908	909	864	878
1971	901	892	919	883	874	882

Uttar Pradesh, particularly Eastern Uttar Pradesh, is a tract of chronic outmigration, particularly of males. Assam and West Bengal have chronically received male selective immigration. No one explanation therefore fits this table.

Table 6
States which have been close to all-India
average in Sex Ratio.

	Gujarat	Maharashtra
1921	944	950
1931	945	947
1941	941	949
1951	952	941
1961	940	936
1971	936	932

Even more intriguing has been a whole range of inter-state, inter-district variations, and, if one looks more closely, intra-district, inter-taluk, even inter-village variations.

From the above table it can be argued with some confidence that the census undercount of females probably worked itself out in various parts of the country between 1901 and 1921. Nobody has yet argued that the

quality of the census count may have deteriorated from 1921 onwards, particularly in respect of females. Such a possibility seems unlikely particularly after the abandonment of the one-night census counts after 1931. The sample post-enumeration checks conducted in 1951, 1961 and 1971 betray little discrimination against the counting of females.

On the other hand *purdah*, which was once held responsible for the undercount of females as well as the shortness of female lives, has steadily diminished in many areas, or at least, has not intensified. There was speculation in the early census reports of a peculiarly high masculinity at birth in India, which have not been borne out by prolonged and searching investigation. The masculinity at birth is still of the order of 104 to 107 male births per 100 female births. There were speculations, again on race climate, season of gestation (the seasonality of births in India favouring the spring and autumn), food (the farinaceousness of Indian meals presumed to favour masculinity, but no point was made of the lack of proteins in the meals of growing and adult females causing deterioration in their health), consanguineous marriages (which oddly enough prevail even today in many of those areas where the sex ratio is above par) and polyandry (which obtains in very limited areas of India). There has been longstanding evidence of female infanticide in the north-western and Rajputana regions, against which the British Government took certain steps, and also among the hill tribes of Orissa. In the past few decades the all-India and State Census Reports have paid varying emphasis on the following possible causes : (a) female infanticide; (b) greater neglect of females specially at the earlier ages; (c) premature cohabitation and child bearing coupled with unskilled midwifery; (d) hard work for female particularly among lower income groups which constitute the bulk of the nation; and (e) general adverse conditions of climate, nutrition, ventilation, house accommodation and the like.

The table No. 7 brings out the widening gap between males and females in the last seventy years.

From a difference of only 3.4 million in 1901 the male-female gap has been steadily and rapidly widening each year and shows no sign of abating. On the contrary, widening of the gap seems to have dramatically accelerated since 1951. The female death rate in 1901 overtook the later substantially in 1911 and has never looked back. What is more, the differences between the female and male death rates reached its highest in 1961 to the extent of 2.9 per thousand. The following sex and age specific mortality rates extracted from the All-India and Age Life Tables for 1941-50, 1951-60 and 1961-70, would be found very revealing.

Table 7
Population of Males and Females 1901-1971
(in 000's)

	Population of males	Population of females	Difference between males and females	Sex ratio F/M	Decade growth rate of males	Decade growth rate of females	Estimated death rates for Previous decade per 1000	
							Males	Females
1901	120,911	117,485	3,426	972			50.4	49.9
1911	128,385	123,708	4,677	964	6.18	5.30	46.6	48.2
1921	128,546	122,775	5,771	955	0.13	0.75	52.8	53.5
1931	143,055	135,922	7,133	950	11.29	10.71	35.2	47.7
1941	163,825	154,833	8,990	945	14.52	13.91	27.2	29.4
1951	185,828	175,560	9,968	946	13.25	13.39	28.8	30.2
1961	236,293	212,942	13,351	941	21.97	21.29	20.5	23.4
1971	283,937	264,013	19,924	930	25.47	23.98		

Table 8

Age Specific Mortality Rates (qx) for Males and Females, All-India,
1941-50 1951-60 and 1961-70

	M a l e s			F e m a l e s		
	1951	1961	1971	1951	1961	1971
0	.19000	.15322	.13500	.17500	.13826	.13000
1	.06104	.03014	.04056	.08038	.03620	.04826
2	.03648	.02374	.01256	.04904	.02863	.01719
3	.02495	.01837	.00685	.03269	.02227	.00900
4	.01967	.01395	.00578	.02456	.01702	.00700
5	.01710	.01040	.00491	.02058	.01278	.00662
6	.01620	.00765	.00423	.01887	.00945	.00577
7	.01534	.00562	.00373	.01730	.00695	.00515
8	.01452	.00423	.00341	.01581	.00519	.00463
9	.01378	.00338	.00328	.01442	.00407	.00403
10	.01308	.00300	.00302	.01310	.00350	.00344
15	.01064	.00497	.00276	.00836	.00530	.00350
20	.01049	.00533	.00314	.00784	.00560	.00435
25	.01197	.00625	.00493	.01142	.00628	.00588
30	.01413	.00790	.00693	.01673	.01245	.00747
35	.01704	.01238	.01051	.02136	.01940	.01155
40	.02020	.01794	.01327	.02428	.02279	.01610
45	.02482	.02323	.01724	.02735	.02522	.01921
50	.03232	.02961	.02318	.03133	.02984	.02254
60	.05726	.04964	.04316	.04996	.04574	.03956
70	.10439	.08218	.07121	.08816	.07030	.06882

First, the table 8 gives an idea of the enormity of neglect that normally attends female babies and young girls from birth to about age 9 and the alarming pace at which this selective neglect has been growing between 1941-50 and 1961-70 compared to male mortality. The normal experience of most countries is that the higher masculinity at birth is rapidly reduced by a higher rate of male mortality at age 0, male infants being naturally more vulnerable than females at that age, and as male and female babies proceed through life, their ratio is quickly adjusted to par. This seems to have been the experience of India, too, in earlier decades, although there

may be reason to suspect that earlier actuaries may have been biased in their calculations by the study of age smoothing in European countries. All the same it will be worth recalling the figures of past decades up to age 5.

Table 9
Age Specific Mortality of Males and Females
at Ages 0 to 5 1881-1931.

	A g e s					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Males						
1881	.2841	.0942	.0587	.0415	.0306	.0241
1891	.2726	.0908	.0602	.0437	.0341	.0268
1901	.2854	.0888	.0638	.0468	.0349	.0267
1911	.2900	.0912	.0657	.0483	.0360	.0275
1931	.2487	.0918.	.0564	.0392	.0274	.0193
Females						
1881	.2426	.0798	.0505	.0363	.0273	.0220
1891	.2399	.0813	.0554	.0411	.0327	.0263
1901	.2588	.0873	.0605	.0442	.0351	.0291
1911	.2846	.0862	.0616	.0451	.0337	.0262
1931	.2323	.0865	.0506	.0340	.0233	.0165

Table 9 supplements Table 8 and serves as a foil to the pattern of change that came about in 1940-1970 against the background of 1881-1931. For example, we find from Table 9 that in the earlier period 1881-1931 the mortality of females babies in each of the ages 0 to 5 was in each decade substantially lower than that of male babies, except for ages 4 to 5 in 1901, where the former was slightly higher. Not so in the later period of 1940-1970 as we see in Table 8. A very substantial change had occurred in the course of 1931-51, for, except for age 0, the mortality of females at each of the ages 1 to 9 was notably higher than that of males for each of the census years in the period 1941-50 to 1961-70. The two streams of mortality rates tend to get even with each other only as late as age 9, but even at this point the female mortality rate has a distinctly higher, though not notable, edge over the male rate. In 1951 female mortality at age 15 was notably lower than the male mortality rate at that age but this favourable picture was reversed in no uncertain terms particularly

in 1971. The rate of female mortality between ages 15 and 45 has been higher for every year than male mortality in the three decades, from which unequal race females mortality emerges as lower than male mortality only as late as age 50 onwards. Even here the 1961 rate of female mortality at age 50 is marginally higher than the male rate.

This is the all-India picture. What is even more distressing is that the southern zone, which has traditionally been fortunate in having had a higher female sex ratio over the decades has been rapidly shedding this advantage and exhibiting higher female mortality particularly since 1931. Table 10 has been abstracted from the life tables of 1931, 1951 and 1961.

Table 10

Age Specific Mortality for Selected Ages of Males and Females in Madras in 1931 and in the Southern Zone in 1951 and 1961

Ages	Madras (1931)		Southern Zone 1951		Southern Zone 1961	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	.2355	.2146	.1700	.1550	.1384	.1272
1	.0895	.0789	.0554	.0618	.0391	.0434
2	.0537	.0440	.0325	.0369	.0308	.0345
3	.0358	.0274	.0218	.0243	.0239	.0269
4	.0241	.0170	.0168	.0162	.0181	.0207
5	.0164	.0112	.0145	.0151	.0135	.0156
15	.0091	.0094	.0 83	.0059	.060	.0064
20	.0118	.0140	.0090	.0063	.0062	.0066
25	.0137	.0185	.0113	.0097	.0070	.0073
30	.0173	.0217	.0130	.0132	.0081	.0137
35	.0228	.0251	.0143	.0160	.0100	.0203
40	.0281	.0294	.0162	.0185	.0148	.0217
45	.0333	.0338	.0192	.0208	.0219	.0249

The differential deterioration in female mortality vis-a-vis male mortality at almost all the selected ages between 1931 and 1961 hits one in the eye. In 1931 in Madras female enjoyed a lower mortality at all ages between 0 and 15. In 1951 this advantage in the early ages was dramatically lost except at age 0. In every age up to age 5 females

Table 11

Population of Males and Females in Age Groups for All-India 1951-1971 (The figures, in hundreds, have been taken from the age tables smoothed by the Registrar General of India)

Age Groups	1951		1961		1971	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	59,771	58,193	34,501	84,097	95,190	88,230
1-4	184,288	183,964	283,964	273,949	358,160	337,820
5-9	236,124	228,303	294,638	284,668	397,040	377,410
10-14	213,052	199,810	254,905	241,767	341,110	309,200
15-19	188,115	177,970	221,275	208,477	277,730	262,130
20-24	165,853	161,056	194,848	184,693	238,403	232,600
25-29	150,635	144,665	175,822	166,835	210,900	205,520
30-34	136,636	126,867	157,292	145,931	188,770	179,380
35-39	120,312	108,138	136,056	121,152	166,930	151,310
40-44	103,156	91,181	115,502	100,675	142,670	124,330
45-49	86,309	76,495	96,608	83,276	118,320	100,750
50-54	69,126	62,475	78,191	68,009	94,010	80,570
55-59	52,797	49,518	60,417	53,800	73,610	65,000
60-64	38,134	37,417	43,774	40,868	54,720	49,380
65'+	28,068	29,068	62,129	65,938	81,810	76,500
TOTAL	1,832,867	173,512	2,258,130	2,124,585	2,839,370	2,640,130

Table 12 gives the deficit of females vis-a-vis males in age groups and the proportion of females per 100 males in each age group 1951-71.

Table 12

Deficit of Females vis-a-vis Males in Age Groups (in hundreds) and the Proportion of Females per 100 Males in each Age Group 1951-61 (derived from Table 11)

Age Groups	Deficit of Females vis-a-vis Males ('00s)				Percentage of Females to Males		
	1951	1961	1971		1951	1961	1971
0	1,578	404	6,960		97.4	99.5	92.7
1-4	324	8,223	20,340		99.8	97.1	94.3
5-9	7,821	9,970	19,630		96.7	96.6	95.1
10-14	13,242	13,138	31,910		93.8	94.8	90.6
15-19	10,145	12,798	15,600		94.6	94.2	94.4
20-24	4,797	9,755	5,800		97.1	94.8	97.6
25-29	5,970	8,989	5,380		96.0	94.9	97.4
30-34	9,769	11,361	9,390		92.9	92.8	95.0
35-39	12,174	14,904	15,620		89.9	89.1	90.6
40-44	11,975	14,827	18,340		88.4	87.2	87.1
45-49	21,789	12,882	17,570		88.6	86.7	85.2
50-54	6,649	10,182	13,440		90.4	87.0	85.7
55-59	3,279	6,617	8,610		93.8	89.1	88.3
60-64	717	2,906	5,340		98.1	93.4	90.2
65 +	509	3,809	5,310		101.8	106.1	93.5
Total	110,738	140,765	199,240				

suffered from a higher mortality rate than males. It is difficult to say how much of the differential improvement between ages 15 and 30 in the southern zone should be attributed to the difference in the process of age smoothing adopted in 1931 and 1951, but even this improvement between age 15 and 30 was lost in the decade 1961, and it should be remembered that the techniques of age smoothing in 1951 and 1961 were identical. Between 1951 and 1961 the gap between male and female mortality, to the disadvantage of females had widened practically at each age from 1 to 15 and the advantage that females had enjoyed between ages 15 and 30 in 1951 was not only wiped out but female mortality from age 15 onwards was noticeably higher in 1961 than in 1951.

Let us now look at the deficit of females in absolute numbers that has developed between 1951 and 1971 for all-India. See Table 11.

Table 12 provides an idea of the dynamics of female deficit in the post-independence era among the various age groups. It indicates that universally observed higher mortality of males at age 0 obtained also in India in 1951 and 1961. This is explained by the fact that the sex ratio at birth should be somewhere between 93 and 96 in India (104 to 107 males per 100 females), but the higher mortality of males in the first year of life should push up this ratio for age 0 to above 96, which is what we find for 1951 (97.4) and 1961 (99.5). But in 1961-70 relatively higher mortality afflicted females even in this age 0, and the sex ratio came down to 92.7. In other words, the normally and biologically higher mortality among males at age 0 was nullified in India and the deaths of female infants were proportionally higher than those of males, thus depressing the sex ratio at age 0 from 93 to 96 at birth to 92.7 at the end of the first year of life. In short, for every 100 males alive at age 1, the number of females in 1971 was short by 4.7 (97.4 - 92.7) and 6.8 females (99.5 - 92.7) compared respectively to 1951 and 1961. It must be noted however that the sex ratio at age 0 for 1971 was unusually low even for India. The ratio reaches a significant low for ages 10-14 for all three decades. The shortage is of course accelerated by the deficit cohorts in one ten-year cohort being accentuated by the next ten-year cohort in the next census through mortality differentials. The ratio should have made up from age 15-19 onwards but in India, the higher mortality of females keeps this ratio down between age 15 to 34. The deficit thus created is reinforced by higher mortality among females between ages 35-49, which goes on depressing the sex ratio still further from which it never recovers in 1971, although it did stage a recovery both in 1951 and 1961 for age 65 and above.

A pertinent question at this point is whether or how much the different techniques of age smoothing applied in successive censuses may have contributed to the different pictures of mortality that emerged in the two historic periods 1881-1931 and 1951-1971. It will be recalled that the technique of smoothing was almost identical between 1881 and 1931, while that of 1951 to 1971 was identical also. But osculatory technique adopted in 1951 onwards was different from that adopted in the earlier period and different assumption were also made for ages above 60 in the two periods. In addition bad and erratic reporting of ages may have accentuated differential undercount of the sexes in certain censuses. The differential impact of past famines and epidemics may have left their distortion on the estimates of age specific death rates. All the same, within each period, on the assumption, quite warranted in this case, of constancy in error, there is little reason to reject the trends and it is these trends that are alarming.

Did the Indian Census develop a sudden and mounting undercount of females at all the ages after 1931 ? The Census reports of the Union and the States for any year after 1911 do not raise any doubt or suspicion on this score. Even if we assume that census takers are prone to take a defensive posture in support of the completeness of their counts, it will be admitted that no doubt or suspicion of this nature has been seriously expressed by even the widely ranged community of scholars who have carefully handled Indian Census data. This doubt would have been valid if steep or irregular declines in sex ratio had been recorded for certain year. On the contrary, the decline has been steady and staircasewise from years to year which adds to the gravity of the record. What is more, the general growth rate of the population along with the deduced birth and death rates for the last several decades does not in any serious way throw doubt on the magnitude of the reported counts. It is, therefore, difficult to attribute the slow and steady pattern of decline to systematic and increasing undercount of the female population alone, particularly when areas which in the past had been chronically suspected of female undercounts have improved their female counts precisely in these decades in which the sex ratio has continued its all-India fall.

In the Gazetteer of India published in 1965, the present writer made the following observation :

“Even allowing for the argument that the differences between the male and female rates are so slight that they may be attributed wholly to defective age returns or computational errors, the fact

remains that at each successive census the enumeration of females and their ages have, if anything, improved rather than worsened. Whatever the reason, the prospects of survival of females seem to have been ever so slightly better before 1921 than after. While the risk of female deaths at most ages seems to have steadily decreased especially after 1921, there has been no corresponding improvement in female deaths. In the first place, it is often contended, without much evidence of course, that masculinity at birth obtains to a greater extent in India than elsewhere. Secondly, girls, in the first few years of their life, still seem to suffer from greater neglect than boys, as a result of which nature's balancing action of taking away more boys than girls in the first years of life does not properly come into play, and the survival of girls never seems to draw even with that of boys. Thirdly, a heavy toll of female lives is taken in the earlier period of the reproductive age, that is, between the ages of 15 and 34. The toll is so heavy that the difference between the male and female population grows awarckedly rapid and wide and this gap is never made up in middle or old age. What is more, proportionately greater deaths occur among females even between the ages 35 and 54 than is commonly believed. All these factors help to widen the male lead at birth with age, which our still modest expectation of life does not give much of a chance to narrow. The following extracts from the Actuarial Reports of 1881 and 1911 will therefore come as a shock to a person who would like to believe that it has been always like this before.

Another interesting feature of our sex ratio is its uneven distribution throughout the country, so much so that there are distinct tracts of particular ranges cutting across political and administrative boundaries and forming their own regions. Thus, for example, there are recognizable geographical bands where there are more than 1,000 females per 1,000 males. This is reflected also in the sex ratio of urban areas in the North and the South. Variations in sex ratio are not entirely explained by males selective migration. While very few towns (not certainly cities) in the North have their sex ratio anywhere near par, there are a few towns or even cities in the South, especially in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Kerala and Madras where the sex ratio even drops much below 900 females per 1,000 males. This is a matter of great sociological interest to urban planning in India."

The Vital Statistics Division of the Office of the Registrar General, in its Sample Registration System Analytical series no. 4 of 1972, has presented very interesting data which confirm all the inferences drawn so far. Any reader who wishes to pursue the subject further is invited to dip into this bulletin. There has long been a debate whether India's population is biologically different from other populations and whether the male-female ratio at birth is substantially higher than in other countries. One of the tables of this publication seems to suggest that the male ratio may be substantially higher in the urban areas of certain states. But one also wonders whether the system was able to record all births in the urban areas at the very first year of its operation when it started in 1969. Moreover, "the number of births recorded (was) small" and the classification was done by broad age groups. Table 21 of the publication, on its page 21, is reproduced below, the sex ratio being adjusted as females per 100 males.

Table 13
Sex Ratio (F/M \times 100) at Birth by Age of Mother and Overall
Sex Ratio, Urban, 1969.

State	Age Group of Mother			Overall Sex Ratio
	Below 35	35 & above	Combined	
Assam	99.1	116.3	100.8	83.4
Jammu & Kashmir	91.8	92.3	92.0	89.0
Punjab	84.4	69.8	81.9	89.5
Rajasthan	84.7	87.6	85.2	90.3
Uttar Pradesh	88.4	95.4	89.6	86.0

The National Sample Survey, reporting on their NSS 19th Round of July 1964-June 1965, gave the following estimate of sex ratio at birth in rural and urban areas from two interpenetrating half samples. (NSS Report No. 177, page 9 table 34).

	Rural			Urban		
	half sample	half sample	combined	half sample	half sample	combined
Sex ratio (F/M \times 1000)	926	952	935	935	926	934
No. of Sample livebirths	14,026	14,547	28,573	7,257	7,249	14,506

There are, however, several tables in the publication which give such widely differing sex ratios at birth by age of mother and by order of birth for two successive years 1968 and 1969 in rural India that serious doubts are bound to arise about the completeness of the count in either year. The publication presents two more interesting tables, comparing India with other countries, the first of which, however, does not support any biological speciality by way of pronounced male specificity at birth for rural India, while the second table underlines the comparatively much higher death rate of females at all ages up to 34. The figures for rural India relate to the Sample Survey of 1967.

Table 14
Sex Ratio (F/M \times 100) at Birth by Age of Mother for Selected Countries

Country		Sex Ratio at Birth by Age of Mother					
		15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44
U.S.A.	(1966)	95.4	95.4	94.9	95.2	96.2	97.3
Japan	(1965)	94.9	95.1	95.0	94.5	95.7	95.7
Canada	(1966)	94.6	94.8	94.3	96.0	94.9	95.1
Singapore	(1966)	94.8	93.8	94.5	95.8	95.1	94.5
U.K.	(1965)	93.8	94.6	94.7	94.7	95.5	95.2
Bulgaria	(1966)	95.3	93.3	94.2	94.3	91.6	91.9
Greece	(1966)	96.2	92.9	92.0	94.5	92.5	93.2
India (Rural)	(1969)	95.2	92.9	92.7	92.4	91.7	92.8

Table 15
Sex Ratio (F/M \times 100) of deaths by Age at Death for Selected Countries
Sex Ratio by Age at Death

Country	0-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 & above	15-49
U.S.A. (1966)	74.8	63.5	38.8	54.6	62.5	56.3	82.9	55.8
Ceylon (1963)	92.7	98.6	117.2	121.2	91.7	66.0	81.9	99.7
Japan (1965)	74.6	60.4	51.5	63.8	71.4	74.3	91.2	67.1
Singapore (1966)	82.0	75.0	49.3	75.5	65.7	45.0	73.5	56.4
U.K. (1966)	73.4	59.9	39.7	62.0	68.7	63.0	101.6	62.4
India (Rural) (1969)	113.3	107.9	162.9	154.3	83.3	71.0	86.2	109.1

The publication gives another interesting table (no.7) on page 12 giving the mortality of male and female infants by age (a) below 7 days (b) 7-28 days (c) 29 days to 6 months (d) 7 to 12 months for rural India in 1968 and 1969. Dr. Kumudini Dandekar in an article in *Economic and Political Weekly* (vol. X no. 4, October 18, 1975 pp. 1663-67) has incorporated this table to compare with corresponding rates in US, Japan, France, U. K., Thailand and Philippines. The table is reproduced below.

Table 16

Sex Ratios ($F/M \times 100$) of Infant Mortality Rates in Subsections of the First Year of Age in Various Countries

Age Group	US (59)	Japan (58)	France (60)	UK (59)	Thai land (59)	Philippines (59)	Age Group	India Rural (59)	India Rural (69)
-1 day	77.6	76.5	82.2	84.2	84.6	85.0			
1-6 day	71.4	79.2	71.4	69.0	82.0	96.7	1-7 days	88.0	92.3
7-27 days	79.2	86.9	77.2	91.7	83.5	86.6	7-28 days	83.5	118.6
28-5 months	81.7	89.4	73.3	82.0	80.8	94.4	29-6 months	119.0	125.2
6-11 months	90.0	84.8	88.6	89.4	92.0	100.5	7-12 months	128.7	117.0

Of deliberate female infanticide—in other words premeditated doing to death of female infants at birth or soon after birth—there is no evidence in any part of the country. There is not only no evidence with government, but the vigilant Press of India, too, has not been able to detect much since the turn of the century. But of neglect of female infants and babies, there are numerous reports and surveys that will bear out the wide range of available statistics briefly recapitulated above.

While, for paucity of reliable and longterm data the biological hypothesis of a high male ratio at birth is tenuous, the operation of social factors cannot be in doubt. The statistics so far presented show that girls and women plainly suffer from many disadvantages that shorten their lives. What is more, those disadvantages which, until recently, had operated more or less up to age 34 have now spread and affected women up to age 45 or even 50, the greater mortality and morbidity at earlier ages having been visited on cohorts of later to ages.

In her article quoted above, Dr. Dandekar hits, according to the present writer, the nail on the head, and in doing so has dispensed with the usually tongue-in cheek, vague insinuations that pass for scholarly understatement and academic rectitude. Dr. Dandekar says that in India the higher death ratio among females than among males “can be traced to the female’s status as a second class citizen. The dislike of the female child was obvious in the female infanticide common in the nineteenth century or even in the earlier years of the twentieth century. The aversion for females has been evident from a number of enquiries, conducted over the last 25 years, especially asseassing the attituoos of parents towards children or to child bearing. Attitudes towards sterilization or to family planning, given a certain composition of male and female children, prominently suggest the unpopularity of female children. The lower status or dislike of the female is further aggravated day by day by an overwidening gap in the educational level of the males and females or the smaller employability of females as compared to the males. The net effect of all this is a higher death rate among females than among males. Of course, all this is in addition to the hazards of death due to excessive childbearing. Or, it is quite possible that because of the low status of females, males do not so much as *bother* about the excessive burden on them.”

Dr. Dandekar refers to the health survey she conducted in six rural communities in 1957 and quotes two of her tables which are also reproduced below. “It was observed”, says Dr. Dandekar, “that, among non-adults (i.e. age group below 15 years) there were 513 male non-adults ailing, as

Table 17

Percentage Distribution of Ailing Male and Female Non-adults According to Expenditure for Treating Illness

Expenditure on Treatment	Bori		Dhanare		Mirajgaon		Mithbaon	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No treatment	30.8	58.1	18.7	62.1	13.0	27.8	7.6	16.0
Treated free	3.8	2.3	3.7	3.1	19.5	27.2	4.2	2.3
Household treatment and expenses not given	15.4	16.3	54.2	19.2	8.9	9.4	29.2	28.0
Less than Rs. 10	38.5	16.3	15.1	9.4	31.8	23.3	17.4	24.9
Rs. 10 to Rs. 20	3.8	—	3.7	3.5	12.2	6.7	22.9	12.8
Above Rs. 20	7.7	7.0	4.6	2.7	14.6	5.6	18.7	16.0
Total 100	26	42	219	255	124	180	14.4	2.35

TABLE 10

Percentage Distribution of Ailing Male and Female Adults according to the Expenditure for Treating the Illnesses

Expenditure on Treatment	Bori		Dhanare		Mirajgaon		Mithbaon		Midolgi		Nalwar	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No treatment	13.3	21.6	16.0	34.1	9.1	17.3	1.4	10.5	16.1	29.2	20.9	65.5
Treatment free	4.8	—	1.5	2.8	11.7	18.2	2.3	0.9	3.4	1.8	2.6	2.0
Household Treatment & Expenses not given	22.9	31.1	47.5	27.2	13.8	15.9	38.3	30.6	4.6	40.4	1.0	17.0
Less than Rs. 10	22.9	18.9	14.1	8.3	18.6	19.5	7.9	11.4	9.2	13.6	15.6	5.6
Rs. 10-Rs. 20	6.0	12.2	7.3	13.8	18.6	9.1	16.4	16.9	8.1	4.6	13.0	3.8
Above Rs. 20	30.1	16.2	13.6	13.8	28.2	20.0	33.7	29.7	55.6	10.4	46.9	6.1
Total 100	83	74	206	217	231	220	214	545	87	603	192	1210

Table 19

Percentage Distribution of Male and Female Adults, Classified by Treatments Employed to Cure Illnesses

Treatment taken	Bori		Dhanaro		Miraigaon		Mithbaon		Midalgai		Nalgai		All six Centres	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Doctors Patent	28.1	12.3	17.5	16.4	73.6	53.6	55.4	51.6	68.8	23.7	52.1	12.1	50.1	25.4
Medicines	28.1	19.2	5.8	1.9	0.4	7.7	3.7	5.7	—	7.2	0.5	2.9	4.4	5.0
Mantriks	2.4	26.0	16.0	23.5	0.9	2.3	0.5	1.2	2.3	3.3	1.0	4.4	4.2	5.4
Domestic Traditional Remedies or no Treatments	41.4	42.5	60.7	58.2	25.1	36.4	40.4	41.5	29.1	65.8	46.4	80.6	41.3	64.2
TOTAL	10082	73	206	213	235	220	213	506	86	599	192	1190	1010	2801
Information about the type of treatment not given	1	1	—	4	—	—	1	39	1	4	—	20	3	68

compared to 730 females, in the year of the survey (Table 17). The difference in the two sexes, in terms of ailing, could not be explained by their slightly different numbers in the surveyed area. Among the non-adults, the percentage of males getting some medical treatment was much higher than the percentage of females. The same is true for adult males and females (Table 18). Moreover, the male/female differences were very striking in the backward villages which enjoyed less communication with the outside world". Table 19 "demonstrate the kind of treatment that was available to male and female adults; the lower status of women meant that they generally received free, traditional treatment—or no treatment at all".

It would be difficult to substantiate deliberate neglect on the part of physicians and surgeons to attend to female infants and toddlers or failure and neglect on the part of parents to seek medical attention for them as promptly as they do for male infants and toddlers but there does seem to exist tell-tale evidence from cause of death records at least from several cities that the proportion of deaths from the twenty very important killer illnesses in India is higher for the majority of these illnesses in the age groups 0 and 1-4 among females than among males. While at these ages, female babies are supposed to be biologically hardier than male babies, the commonsense reason that readily and naturally occurs to one in explanation of the higher female mortality is that female babies are brought to the hospitals or consigned to the care of doctors invariably at a much later stage than male babies are, that is, when the illness is usually far too advanced to respond readily to medical care and is likely to end fatally. Reliable data on the subject are scanty but the following table reconstructed from data presented in the Registrar General's Annual Vital Statistics Reports for 1960, 1961 and 1962 will be found instructive.

SRS Analytical series no. 4 referred to above, in its table 12 on page 17, shows how shockingly high the maternal mortality rate in rural India in 1968 was compared to U.S.A.'s 32 per 100,000 livebirths in 1965, U.K.'s 29 in 1968 declining to 25 in 1970, Hong Kong's 44 in 1966, Malayasia's 200 in 1965 and Sri Lanka's 300 in 1962. In 1968 the Indian figure was 573. As Dr. Dandekar argues, this is partly due to the fact that of the total births in India during a year, only about 40 per cent are of the first and second order babies, while in the advanced countries, the corresponding figure is not less than 70 per cent. "This", observes Dr. Dandekar, "has its impact on the death rate of the Indian female because she cannot bear the burden of excessive childbearing".

At this point if one bears in mind the hard work that girls and women throughout India have to put in without fail from one day to

another particularly in the lower income brackets and the adverse conditions of purdah, insanitary housing and lack of ventilation, lack of open air exercise, and lack of nutrition they have to suffer from, then alone one can appreciate how their cup of misery becomes full, and has a tendency to overflow with time.

It will be pertinent, in passing, to pause for a moment at nutrition for instance. A WHO study, recently directed by Professor V. Ramalingaswami, Director of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, has revealed that anaemia has the highest prevalence in India. A bulletin of the Indian Council of Medical Research says that "about 70 per cent of pregnant women in the country suffer from anaemia which contributes to increased risk to their unborn children and 40 per cent of maternal deaths. The commonest causes has been found to be iron deficiency. What has caused greater concern is the discovery that anaemia in Indian women unlike their counterparts in western countries is not overcome satisfactorily even after supplementing their diet with iron during pregnancy. The iron therapy was found to have no beneficial effect on their babies either. The WHO sponsored study, which involved 647 women, has repeated that pregnant women in India must be provided with a daily oral supplement of at least 120 mg of iron plus vitamin B12 and folic acid. The scientists, however, found that "even with the administration of 240 mg of iron, folic acid and vitamins B12 about 56% of the Indian women studied were still anaemic by WHO standards in marked contrast with the findings in the West". The scientists believe that several factors would be responsible for the high prevalence of the anaemia in Indian women in spite of iron, folic acid and B12 supplementation. The leakage caused by chronic amoebiasis, malaria, other wasting diseases, intestinal parasitic and helminth infections must be enormous and a chronic state of malnutrition and malabsorption must also impede absorption of iron and other blood-forming medicines. The lack of safe drinking water and of proper arrangements for disposal of human faecal waste and animal excreta along with unhygienic surroundings must be a prime cause.

What does a declining sex ratio portend for the future of the population of India? It is not a good portent for a decline in the rate of growth of population, for, after all, women are the only source of population and the less of them we have the better ?

The declining proportion of females and the high rate of maternal mortality underline several serious shortcomings. It will suffice to mention a few of them here by way of illustration. First, they show how rudimen-

tary and patchy our maternal and child health services are in spite of the investments made and the promise of more. MCH services have not yet, to flog a cliché, touched the fringe of the problem. And unless MCH develops it will be very difficult to deliver nutrition and family planning : the postpartum programme will sit pretty on paper. Second, they are the direct cause and effect of lack of even elementary education among women the incidence of which is still woefully low in most of rural India. Lacking education, women will not be mindful of their due and will continue to lack the wherewithal with which to improve their state or assert their right to health. Thirdly, excessive childbearing and interrupted span of life, as has already been observed earlier, limits employability and wages. Women are deprived of the opportunity to increase their skills over time and are liable to serious interruptions in whatever work they are employed. This perpetuates the vicious circle of low wages and low skills and shut out employment in all but the areas of traditional skill in vocations that are but another name of a way of life, like traditional agriculture. This has been at the root of much structural unemployment in recent decades, in as much as women have been increasingly shut out from those organised sectors of industry which have demanded more and more of technical as well as minimal levels of formal education to understand and run complicated machinery and coordinate with complex assembly and flow line arrangements. This has a direct consequence on the national income, even as it has on per capita and household income, to which women's contribution in cash terms is always regarded as marginal although their labours are, on the whole, more considerable than man's for homemaking or for bringing up the nation. The fourth consequence, therefore, is diminution of the value and status of women, which the shortness of their existence does not help to enhance. Fifthly, the cheapness of female lives and their expendable character attract burdens of repeated childbearing for that is what they are normally regarded as fit for. This has the effect of pushing up the number of pregnancies and birth per woman. This is their prime functions by which their value is judged and this attitude is by no means conducive to family planning. Women are flogged with child bearing even as there is a belief in certain modern technologies that the machine must be flogged to yield the maximum in the minimum time before it is replaced. Sixthly, high mortality among women automatically brings in its wake high mortality among infants and very young children and reinforces the desire for more children that are needed as insurance against death. Seventhly, high mortality attracts high replacements and this does not augur well for

voluntary population limitation, which, and not government enforced termination, must be one of the prime ingredients of what passes for quality of life. A declining sex ratio, therefore, is nothing short of a great stain on the record of a nation, standing as it does for lack of minimum facilities of education, health, MCH, nutrition, women's employment and status.

Education and National Integration

Khawaja Ahmad Abbas

IF it is true, as the charter of the UNESCO declares, that wars begin in the minds of men, in the national context of India, it is equally true that communal jealousies, rivalries, and prejudices, leading to inter-communal tension and riots, also begin in the minds of men. And, therefore, education will be the most effective instrument for changing the minds of our people. Mutual understanding instead of prejudices, love instead of hate, can be inculcated only through the medium of education—in the broadest sense of the word.

Daniel Webster had said over a century ago about America—and it is equally true of the situation in India—that, “I apprehend no danger to the country from a foreign foe. Our destruction, should it come, will come from another quarter, from ignorance and inattention of the people, from their carelessness and negligence.”

Our three great political parties—the Congress, the Janata (which embraces the Socialists) and the Communists—have made the people militant and self-assertive ! A kind of political education of the masses has been going on—the people will not be cowed down easily. But their rational and cultural education has been sorely neglected.

They still believe in superstitions (as against pure religion), they still stick to outmoded institutions and practices, they still nurse ancient prejudices. These prejudices may be religious, or they may be parochial, or they may be against the other castes.

An example may be given. During 1977 elections the peasants of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were anxious to register their protest against compul-

sory sterilization which, they imagined, was tantamount to castration and deprivation of their sexual impulses.

We have been aiming to produce a classless, casteless society. But at the time of the election, democracy is perverted by an appeal to the caste prejudices of the people. At the time of the election, we are no longer Indians but *Rajputs*, *Ahirs*, *Vaishyas*, *Kayasthas* etc., Muslims (or one of the castes of Muslims like *Ansaris* or *Shaikhs* or Syeds) and Christians (even among Christians, there are castes and communities like Catholics, Protestants and Prebysterians, etc.)

To appeal to the caste or communal instincts of our people not only keeps the people enmeshed in casteism and communalism (or parochialism) but it is the very negation of a Secular Democracy. In the 1977 election, however, the Castist factor was a little less pronounced as there were other more sensitive issues like the compulsory sterilization which cut across caste and religious differences.

Regionalism and Parochialism are two other enemies of which we have to be beware ! Parochial parties like the *Shiv Sena* (of Maharashtra) and the D.M.K. and A.I.A.D.M.K. (of Tamil Nadu) strike at the very roots of democracy, they make the development of a rational outlook difficult—if not impossible ! They breed arrogance (whether racial or communal) and the “I-am-better-than-you” attitude among vast masses of people which is the negation of broad humanism which should be our cherished aim.

Linguism is another impediment in our way, for it seeks to perpetuate the notion that those who speak any one language are, in fact, superior to, and different from, other people. This is also antidemocratic and antinational.

How backward and lacking in rationality and unity is our political education is can be illustrated by the fact that in 1947, a trade union struck work in a Bombay mill, because the Hindu workers refused to work with other workers (and members of their trade union) who were Muslims.

Similarly an organisation called *Shivaji Park Swaraksha Dal*, by a majority of votes, originally refused to engage volunteer from the *Azad Hind Fauj* because they included a Musalman I.N.A. man. “How can we trust a Muslim ?” said an otherwise well-meaning Sethji who called himself a follower of Gandhiji. It was after a lot of persuasion and insistence on the part of the I.N.A. officers that finally their volunteers were given

jobs of defence, but they would not send a detachment without at least a single Muslim in it.

Communal prejudices die hard. On the Kashmir front I was once shown some corpses of Pakistani invaders whom the accompanying soldiers persisted in calling by the derogatory word, "*Musallahs*" applied to all Muslims. The whole point of Secularism and the fact that Kashmir Muslims and other Muslims (like Brigadier Usman) were fighting shoulder to shoulder on the same side as them, had completely gone over their heads. In their village they had been taught to call every Muslim as "*Musallah*" and the phraseology—based on an anti-Muslim distrust—stuck to their tongues.

How then can we fight this attitude based on old prejudices? Through mass education based on Socialism and Secularism, of course. This education must begin at the kindergarten stage and must go on to the concept of life-long education of the adults—be they workers or peasants, soldiers or students.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once told a group of students that if they wanted to bring about revolution in the country they must first bring about a revolution in the minds of the people—through Education and Culture. Thirty years later Mao Tse Tung gave the call for a "Cultural Revolution" in China !

The new concept of Education that will encourage Rationalism and Humanism to achieve Secularism and Socialism, can be inculcated in the following ways :—

(1) The children in the Kindergarten stage must be able to sing national songs in chorus that create the one-ness of our nation, despite the variety of religions and cultures. If such songs are not available, they must be specially written by our poets and then universally broadcast through children's magazines, children's programmes on T.V, and Radio, and by collective singing in schools for the very young. Similarly, stories and plays for the children must teach them to love and respect all religions and other religious leaders.

(2) For the older children, text books of history must be written or re-written to avoid any reference to the Aryan-Dravidian conflict, (both the cultures must be taught to be respected in the North and the South) and lessons on Shivaji, Aurangzeb, etc. must be rationally and historically taken into account the good points of both the sides—that Aurangzeb was

equally hard and fanatical in his dealings with Muslims and his own relations as much as against Hindus.

In Shivaji's rise should be highlighted the part played by his Muslim followers and generals (like artillery officer, Ibrahim Gardi) objectively as possible. Shivaji must be the secular leader and hero (as he was) of all the Indian people and not of the Hindus alone. The campaign of Shivaji must be studied as the attempt of the *Subedars* of provincial governments to win provincial autonomy and not as a religious war.

Similarly the ancient stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata must be re-written to give a secular perspective to the struggle of the Aryans and the un-Aryans (Dravids) who were equally cultured and had a much-developed civilization of their own, *not* as fight between the civilized Aryans and the un-civilized Dravidians. Such a rational, and secular, interpretation of history will go a long way to remove the religious or regional prejudices from the young minds of the students.

All schools must begin with an Assembly, at which secular national songs or prayers must be sung or recited in chorus.

(3) Text-books and supplementary books used in schools, specially those dealing with history and historical characters, must be re-written from a secular and humanist point of view, to eliminate all references which might encourage religious fanaticism, regional exclusiveness, or communal prejudices. Lessons must be added in these books which teach the young students to respect all religions and religious leaders.

(4) While schools must be told to leave religious instruction of students to their parents and families, ethics must be taught at all levels, emphasizing the value of truth-telling, honesty, humanity, rationality and self-sacrifice for human ideals.

(5) According to the concept of life-long education, adult education must be started at all after-school levels, for all the people, organized according to their professions—for workers in factories, for peasants through their panchayats, for artisans in their Co-operatives or Collectives, to teach them the concepts of humanism, secularism and socialism.

These lessons may be supplemented by talks on Radio, through T.V. programme, etc. For that a T.V. net-work must be established of community-viewing in the villages, and new channels must be created in the Radio and T.V. to cater to the cultural and social needs of the villagers in their own language or dialect.

(6) These must be further supplemented by creative use of folk-dramas, *Tamashas*, *Burra Kathas*, folk-dances, *jatras* and other forms of folk theatre. Also puppeteers must be trained at Regional Centres and encouraged to use their puppets for the propagation of national policies and programmes, like socialism, secularism, family Planning and tree-planting.

(7) Progressive Writers—i.e., creative writers who are not ashamed to use their pens for propagating national ideals—must be encouraged to study the national projects, and to write about them and the national ideals with which they have been started in the form of novel, short stories, film scripts and dramas about projects which are themselves the symbols of integration.

Films of National emotional integration should be given much more incentives like the exemption of entertainment tax. For this a new category of films must be introduced so that films certified by the Censor Board as predominantly cultural and national must be exempted from the entertainment tax.

Writers and Artistes' associations and organisations must be contacted and must be given facilities to undertake tours of the project areas to receive direct inspiration for their writings.

(8) The text-books (specially on History of India) must be revised and re-written upto university level and research must be encouraged to be conducted on secular themes and must highlight the development of Indian history and culture.

(9) A special effort should be made to secularise our Defence forces. Special and separate courses of instructions will be given to officers and Jawans. The present casteist nomenclature of regiments like the *Sikhs* and *Jats* will be changed to name them after the heroes and heroines of our freedom struggle—like the Rani of Jhansi, Zafar Shah, Tantia Tope, Subhas Bose, Ashfaqullah, and Bhagat Singh, so as to inspire our officers and Jawans with the example of such heroes.

The imperialist tradition of naming regiments after the allegedly martial communities will be given up. The whole difference between the martial and non-martial communities and people is artificial and must be given up in the interest of national integration.

(10) National integration will be expected of the officials of the Government at all levels at the Centre and in the States. There must be

Refresher Courses for them at different levels to help them achieve emotional integration which, in their turn, they will pass on to their subordinates and to the general population.

National and emotional integration will not be achieved in a single day. This is an arduous and uphill task. But if it is to be achieved the basic fact is to be understood that it will be possible only through education and educational media.

Education as an Instrument for Equality of the Sexes

Vina Mazumdar

SINCE the nineteenth century education has been regarded in most countries as the most powerful instrument to improve the status of women. In India, the question of *improving* women's status became identified, at least officially, with the achievement of *equality* between men and women.

Since 1931, when the Indian National Congress accepted equality as its social goal, the promise was incorporated in the Constitution, and the Directive Principles of State Policy indicated the founding-fathers' continued faith in universal education, as one of the main instruments for this purpose, the other two being equal political and legal rights. Women's right to education was propagated as essential to achieve the goals set before the nation.

"In a democratic society where all citizens have to discharge their civic and social obligations, differences which may lead to variations in the standard of intellectual development achieved by boys and girls cannot be envisaged"¹

The Constitution sought to achieve redistribution of political and economic power through various measures, but education was seen as the crucial lever to bring about this expected transformation of Indian society. Yet the experience hitherto shows, that our efforts at social engineering have not eliminated inequalities—between different groups, sexes and regions. On the other hand, the Committee on the Status of Women in India found evidence of "further lowering" of women's status, "a process of regression from some of the norms developed during the Freedom Movement" and declining social concern for women and their problems.

1. Report of the Secondary Education Commission, Govt. of India, 1953, Chapter IV.

The story of women's education best reveals this failure, and the contradictions that have come to characterise Indian education today. On the one hand we have achieved fantastic progress in higher education, with women constituting nearly 25 per cent of the university population, a record envied by women in many developed countries. On the other, women account for the largest group among illiterates.

Between 1951 and 1971, the total number of illiterate women *changed* from 161.9 millions to 215.3 millions. Nor can this increase be explained away by increase in population, since we claim that in the same year (1971) 69 per cent of girls in the 6-11 age group were enrolled in schools. Data on enrolment of girls at different levels of the school system portrays a steadily rising coverage. The large majority of illiterate women are in the older group, as the following table will indicate :—

<i>Age-group</i>	<i>% of illiterate women</i>	<i>Number of illiterate women</i>	
		<i>urban areas</i>	<i>rural areas</i>
15—24	67 %	36 lakhs	262 lakhs
25 +	88.6 %	129 lakhs	816 lakhs

Computed from Census of 1971—Source : Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India

Illiteracy is concentrated not only in certain age-groups, but also in some regions, communities and classes. Female literacy rate varies from 53.9 per cent in Kerala to 8.26 per cent in Rajasthan. The Committee on the Status of Women in India identified the States of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh as the most backward in development of women's education. Even within the States, there is gross disparity between different districts. Female literacy ranges from 33.85 per cent (Dehradun) to 4.85 per cent (Basti) in Uttar Pradesh, 31.42 per cent (Indore) to 4.09 per cent (Bastar) in Madhya Pradesh, 29.7 per cent (Hyderabad) to 6.48 per cent (Adilabad) in Andhra Pradesh.

Illiteracy and lack of formal education continue to be very high among scheduled caste, tribal and muslim women. The Committee on the Status of Women in India pleaded that plans for educational development which did not include special priority measures to remove these imbalances will contribute to the increase in inequalities.

Education-watchers all over the world are beginning to admit that instead of being the 'great leveller', the development of education, at least in third world countries, has introduced a new factor of inequality. This is particularly evident in the case of women. The gap in status, life-styles,

aspirations and communication between the educated and the uneducated women is far greater than the earlier one dictated by caste, religion and other cultural factors.

Even among the educated there are sharp divisions-determined by generation, class and training. The difference between the '*mods*' and the '*bahenjis*' may be more pronounced in the metropolitan cities, but they indicate a trend which is fast spreading to other centres, and whose influence should not be underated. Nor should these groups be identified with the earlier assumed divisions between the 'emancipated' and traditional' women.

Emancipation or liberation can be interpreted in many ways. The leaders of the movement for women's equality during the twenties and thirties of this century differed radically from the earlier social reforms in their view of the goals of social development.

The earlier reformers had seen education as an instrument to improve women's efficiency to perform her familial roles as wife and mother. Their vision of the future did not extend to equality, or women's right to perform any other roles in society. Their intention was, in effect, to strengthen the existing social structure, and the hold of tradition, through the family as the basic social unit, Urbanisation, modernisation of the economy and westernisation through the 'English' system of education, in their view, were creating communication and knowledge gaps between men and women, and thereby eroding the authority of the family.

Women's education was advocated to arrest this process. Greater efficiency in her familial roles would enhance women's status within her family. Since women's attachment to traditions was believed to be stronger than that of man, enhanced dignity and authority of women within the family would strengthen the hold of tradition in society.¹

The leaders of the women's movement, on the other hand, emphasized equality between the sexes as a basic principle on which the reconstruction of Indian society was to take place. They were not out to perpetuate or strengthen the existing social order. Their inspiration came not from

* For a more elaborate and documented statement of this view, see the author's paper, *The Social Reform Movement from Ranade to Nehru in Indian Moment—from Purdah to Modernity*, Vikas 1076; and *Towards Equality—Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, Government of India, Department of Social Welfare, 1974.

the defenders of the Indian social structure, but from the rebels—Jyotiba Phule and 'Lokhitawadi' Gopal Hari Deshmukh, who saw the subjugation of women as an instrument to perpetuate *brahminical* or caste dominance, from the revolutionaries, who accepted women into their ranks as equally committed to the cause of freedom from alien rule, and above all from Mahatma Gandhi, who believed that the social revolution of his dream would be impossible without equal rights and responsibilities for women. Ideas which proclaimed women to be inferior, less capable or more evil than man, fit only to be his plaything were, in his view, only "man's interested teaching" the product of "his greed for power and fame".

"Woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he .. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have".²

Inspired by such ideas, the women's movement saw emancipation as not merely released from oppressive customs that reduced women's position within the family (as the reformers had viewed it), but as equality of opportunity, responsibility and autonomy to choose one's role, to participate in all aspects of social life, particularly in the struggle for freedom and national reconstruction. Education had to be an instrument for these wider responsibilities and roles, and no longer the limited tool for manufacturing better mothers and wives.

This view has been persistently advocated by women leaders in India—from the representation of university women to the Saddler Commission (1918), to the National Committee on Women's Education (1959) and the Committee on (against ?) Differentiation of Curricula for boys and girls (1964). It has also been endorsed by many expert bodies after independence—the first Five Year Plan (1951), the Secondary Education Commission (1953) and the Education Commission (1966)³.

In spite of such reiteration, it is amazing to see how the older, reformist view continues to influence policies towards women's education. The Radhakrishnan Committee on University Education (1948) might be excused for overlooking all non-familial dimensions of women's lives

2. M.K. Gandhi — *Young India*, 26-2-1918.

3. It should be remembered that Naik Sahib served as member of the National Committee on Women's Education, and as Member-Secretary, Education Commission—endorsed the recommendations of the Committee on Differentiation of Curricula.

because of its date, but no such excuse can be offered for the NCERT, whose draft Approach Paper to the Ten Year School Curriculum, issued in 1976, reads like a throwback to the nineteenth century.⁴

The imprint of this attitude is visible in the persistent differentiation of curricula, with home-science, drawing, painting, music etc., open only to girls, as alternative to compulsory mathematics for boys, and in the lack of options for good basic training in mathematics or sciences in many institutions that cater only to girl students. Even now in the pattern of 'work experience' introduced for girls in most schools including co-educational ones, the differentiation continues to be maintained.

The United Nations' World Plan of Action for the International Women's Decade admits this kind of discrimination as widely prevalent in the educational systems of most countries.

"Girls' choice of areas of study are dominated by conventional attitudes, concepts and notions concerning the respective areas of men and women in society".

The inequality of sexes which begins with differences in socialisation practices for boys and girls, instead of being combated by the educational system is strengthened by the latter through such biases in curricula, training and attitudes of teachers and general educational policies. Analysis of text books reveals the operation of this bias in the images, roles and values projected for and about women. Commenting on the failure of the education system to promote development of needed new values, the Committee on the Status of Women in India observed:

"If education is to promote equality for women, it must make a deliberate, planned and sustained effort, so that the new value of equality of sexes can replace the traditional value system of inequality. The educational system today has not even attempted to undertake this responsibility. In fact, the schools reflect and strengthen the traditional prejudices of inequality through their curricula, the classification of subjects on the basis of sex and the unwritten code of conduct enforced on their pupils.... The concomitant of equality is responsibility and unless this is admitted by men and women equality, the desired transformation of our society will receive a

4. This document has since been revised-eliminating any reference to women. For extracts from the original draft, indicating the bias against equality—see the author's paper 'Higher Education of Women in India'—*Journal of Higher Education* Vol. 1 Number II – UGC—1976.

severe set back. This is one area where a major change is needed in the content and organisation of education.

Educators must admit their responsibility and bring about this much needed change in the values of the younger generation”⁵

The World Plan of Action of the United Nations, emphasising the need for positive and affirmative action to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and to inculcate the value of sex equality, suggests the following specific measures:—

- (i) Re-evaluation of text books and other teaching material to eliminate sexist biases, re-writing them “to ensure that they reflect an image of women in positive and participatory roles in society”.
- (ii) Revising of teaching methods to ensure that “they are adapted to national needs and promote changes in discriminatory attitudes”.
- (iii) Promotion of research “to identify discriminatory practices in education and training and to ensure educational equality”.
- (iv) Encouragement of co-education and mixed training groups to “provide special guidance to both sexes in orienting them towards new occupations and changing roles”.
- (v) Vocational and career guidance programmes to encourage boys and girls “to choose a career according to their real aptitudes and abilities rather than on the basis of deeply ingrained sex stereotyped”.
- (vi) Development of informational and formal and non-formal educational programmes to increase awareness and acceptance of the public, teachers regarding the need to educate and train girls for occupational life.
- (vii) Development of integrated or special training programmes for girls and women in rural areas to increase their participation in economic and social development—such programmes should include not only literacy, but also training in modern agricultural methods, cooperation, entrepreneurship, commerce, marketing, animal husbandry and fisheries as well as health, nutrition, family planning etc.

5. *Townrds Equality* : Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. P. 282.

On the basis of the recommendation of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, and with a view to implementing the UN General Assembly's resolution to implement the World Plan of Action during the decade 1975-85, the Government of India framed a draft National Plan of Action for Women.

The Plan states clearly that the objectives of women's education "cannot be different from those relating to men", i.e. to prepare them to fully participate in socially productive work; to break down biases against women; to make them aware of their social, legal and economic rights; develop self-reliance and economic independence; to impart the idea of equality and participation in development; "and above all to find full expression of her talent, ability and personality to enable her to escape the bonds of superstition and obscuritism. However, in the specific measures suggested, traces of the old bias are not altogether absent as indicated in the following:

"Special efforts should be made to enlarge the scope and coverage of pre-school education programmes like *balwadis* and *anganwadis*, where the *older girls can be* given practical work experience and child-care".

"The curriculum of the middle school stage needs to be given a strong work experience orientation, *introducing girls to crafts and skills which will be of direct use to them in their family, community and farm... It should introduce girls to scientific knowledge, principles of home-making, family life, education, nutrition and diet, environment education and civic education.*

"The primary teacher training course should be revised to prepare trainees for their special responsibility in promoting girls education in rural areas "especially in adapting the content to suit the needs and interests of girls".

"The objectives of vocational training programmes for girls school drop-outs "should be to render them self-sufficient in home management and to help to achieve economic independence—programmes should include courses in sewing, knitting, cooking, nutrition, minor repairs of the house, motherhood, child-care".

"Functional literacy programmes for non-student girls should include *household arts, motherhood, child-care and family planning*⁶.

6. (Draft) National Plan of Action For Women, 1976 (italics mine).

The NCERT's final document on *Approach to the Ten-year School Curriculum* includes a list of values and ideals to be promoted through the educational system which does not include sex equality.

It has to be understood that much of the existing bias is due to the domination of the educational system by urban middle class life situations. Among the working population role differentiation between the sexes has never been so sharp. A tribal or lower caste child is well used to seeing his mother and sister as workers, frequently as the only breadwinners of the family, and not only as home-makers. It can, therefore, be contended that the educational system has also become a powerful instrument of the "sanskritisation process" by which middle class norms and values influence the lower classes of society when they receive education. To this extent, the educational system has contributed to the uprooting and destruction of the relatively more egalitarian values that such children would have absorbed from their communities.

Prof. M.N. Srinivas has been pleading for better understanding of socialisation practices of different communities and regional cultural groups, in order to identify the educational methods needed—either to correct prejudices, or to use existing non-discriminatory role concepts as assets in the educational campaign.

At present our notions of the family and women's roles do not reflect the realities in the lives of the masses of our people. Nor do they reflect the changes that have already occurred in many middle class families.

The result of this contradiction and ambivalence in educational policy and practice can be seen in the increasing confusion in minds of younger women and men in regard to their future lives, roles and aspirations.

Equality is a state of mind. If education fails to develop confidence, sense of responsibility and dignity based on independence among women, then it is not contributing to the development of equality or its acceptance. All that it is managing to achieve is a sense of discontent, frustration and inability to function effectively in the multiple roles that life thrusts on women these days. It also results in a kind of arid elitism, with alienation from social responsibilities and ability to communicate with the less privileged members of their sex.

For both groups, the net outcome is a feeling of insecurity and rootlessness. On the other hand, young men are developing attitudes that discard the dignity guaranteed to previous generations of women, without accepting them as equals, the process of which reduces women to 'objects' or 'commodities' is increasingly visible among the educated, with growing hostility to women's presence and entry into the labour force.

It is a common argument that women increase the unemployment of man. Feminists describe this process as the "marginalisation" of women—a movement against equality. Is it possible to redesign the educational system to the goal set before us earlier ?

Media and Social Responsibility

K. S. Duggal

MEDIA is a double-edged weapon. It can help, it can also harm a cause grievously. In a developing country like India with massive illiteracy, vast distances and formidable diversity, media plays vital role in reaching people, carrying the torch of enlightenment to them and moulding their thinking.

India is a virtual subcontinent with several languages, multiple ways of living castes and creeds. It is also a truism that India, as it is today, was seldom administered as a single entity in history. And yet India was known as one whether it was called *Bharatvarsh* or *Hindustan*. Pilgrims from down south as far away as Kanya Kumari and far-flung Manipur in the east came to Kasi and Varanasi in a regular stream. Sanskrit was the lingua-franca in the sub-continent with no let or hindrance for the regional languages that flourished and, in due course, acquired respectable fund of literature of their own. Religions separated and yet brought people together. Writers and artists, sages and saints, bards and poets travelled the length and breadth of the country. Kalidas born in Madhya Pradesh found his way to the Himalayas. Shankaracharya went up to Kashmir. Guru Nanak was in Nagaland in the east and Sri Lanka in the south. He is said to have had his dialogues with recluses in the neighbourhood of Manasarover deep into the Himalayas and also visited Mecca and travelled up to Baghdad in the west.

Guru Nanak had a message to convey to the people. Five hundred years ago he had neither a newspaper nor any electronic media like Radio, Television or Film to carry his gospel. He, therefore, had to travel from one part of the country to the other. He spoke the language of the people,

the language that the sages and saints of the time had evolved, to serve as the link language. It was also not without reason that Guru Nanak and other saints and mystics like Kabir, Namdev and Farid employed poetry for the spread of their message. It is easier with poetry if the message is to be communicated by the word of mouth.

Today we are fortunate in having an array of media at our disposal. It is a great boon as well as a great responsibility. In India as we are, the media is both misused and also not adequately made use of. Before we are able to exploit the media for national integration and secular polity etc we must plug in the loopholes of their misuse and also at the same time ensure their fuller and adequate use.

Our press is generally responsible ; it has an excellent image ; though this could not be said with the same amount of conviction for the vernacular press. What ails our national press is its monopolist character. When it is misled the entire chain is led astray and the damage is consequential. It is also not immune to pressures and unsavoury influence. We have witnessed it happen many a time. What is the worst feature of our national press is, its unduly exaggerated posture of self-righteousness. In a country where education is yet to be universalised and the democratic tradition strengthened, at times, the truth goes by default. During my tenure as Adviser (Information) in Planning Commission, we had the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission in Nepal visiting India as a guest of the Deputy Chairman of our Planning Commission, Mr D. P. Dhar. The guest was asked for an interview by the Delhi Doordarshan. A senior journalist of one of country's leading dailies was engaged to interview him, and to my horror I found that all the while our journalist was decrying India's Planning Commission and the foreigner was defending it. It was the most irresponsible manner in which a senior journalist could conduct himself. Here was a case of over-confidence on the part of my journalist friend bordering on arrogance and also, perhaps, undue respect for the freedom of the press by Doordarshan. Similarly, lack of imagination or the latent instinct to play clever is also not too infrequently to be witnessed in our press. The other day when the Punjab police official Attwal was done to death on the threshold of the Golden Temple—a most reprehensible act indeed—a Delhi newspaper carried on its front page picture of the main gate of the Golden Temple as if swords were hanging from it. In fact the picture was taken by an ingenious photographer from a shop dealing in swords across the road. I have been

vainly waiting all these days for someone amongst the readers of the paper to point it out.

Radio and Television are said to have been given functional autonomy. Hardly ever they seem to exercise it. Radio caters 90 per cent of the listeners in the country and TV bids to cover 70 per cent of the population by the end of the year. Both the media suffer from unduly accelerated expansion with the result that their software seems to be under frightful strain. The Government has refused to oblige the protagonists of autonomy for these media and the programmers in the media tend to be much too much of disciplined government servants to assert themselves even where exigencies of programme presentation demand it. More often than not their much too servile manner of conducting themselves makes a miserable spectacle. The way at times they overdo the union and state ministers does little credit either to the politicians or the media men. And then the talent in both Radio and TV must not forget that in order to carry conviction with their audiences, they must improve their performance as programmers. If the programmes that you dish out are poor, the programmers message that you carry remains unheeded. A listener gives ear to only those whom he or she respects.

A lot of violence and vulgarity in our society is due to the glut of commercial films. Somehow, our film-makers have come to believe that they have only to entertain. And now their so-called entertainment is brought to every home because of Doordarshan's unabated hunger for the bill of fare. With ever increasing broadcast hours, films come handy for the media men and they grab at them without much regard for their content. The shoe-string budget with which we run our media outfits inevitably leads to it.

The media do have to entertain and inform but at the same time they have to educate. A grave social responsibility devolves upon them. More so in a developing society.

It would be a sad day if our press were to be content with projecting facts and events as they occur and shut their eyes to their causation and consequences. Said Ramanand, Chatterji, the celebrated editor of the *Modern Review*—"Ours is a sacred duty. We must not sacrifice our convictions for any advantage whatsoever. Great is the temptation to play to the gallery, but our task is to mould and guide as well as to give publicity to public opinion."

It is time our press paused and considered if it is allright its being unduly preoccupied with political activity the way it happens to be, today. There was, perhaps, a good justification for it when the country was involved in freedom struggle. Continuing to give primacy to political news or even hard economic news to serve the narrow interests of the politicians and the capitalist lobby is out-dated. The country is waging a determined war against poverty. There is allround developmental activity. Our press must rearrange its priorities and take more and more interest in development and developmental technology. It would give human content to the news media. It would usher in a change in our thinking. We would cease to view issues and happenings as Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. It would foster a national outlook; a people involved in the struggle to better the lot of the country as a whole rather than serve narrow communal interests.

Similarly, Radio and Television must come out of the four walls of the studios and carry their microphones and cameras to the people. It is the only way to eschew sensation served in large doses by our urban-oriented story writers and playwrights. We must promote perception, give it the pride of place. The villager, the man in the street is still sound at heart. The best way to encourage healthy instincts in them is to record them and project the recording back to them. This will make for harmony in the society, promote understanding and usher in unity.

It is an entirely new phenomenon in India the way the popular film has started making inroads into politics. After M.G.R. came N.T.R. and now Amitabh Bachan appears to be waiting in the wings. Film is a powerful instrument in whipping up the imagination of the audiences and enlivening their anticipations. Film makes the viewers identify themselves with the characters in a way no other media can do. It is here that we must take precaution and promote healthy values and secular perceptions. The commercial film maker is interested in maintaining the status quo. He offers a chewing gum and is content with it. He would rather not have his audience involve in social problem and the discontent simmering in the society. A friend from Yugoslavia staying with us started viewing Indian films screened on TV. "But I don't find the sort of life presented in your films anywhere around," she seemed to be at her wit's ends. Films being in the private sector healthy interests of the society can be best safeguarded by injecting socially conscious talent in the medium. What the Films Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is able to do is

precious little. Moreover, it is dubbed as sheer propaganda. It defeats its purpose.

What we need is a revolution in the media culture. It can be brought about by Tagore or a Prem Chand. We must look for the like of them in the media.

I said Media is a double-edged weapon. During the Emergency the entire media was geared in favour of the party-in-power. However, at the first opportunity when the general elections took place, the people voted the party out of power. Truth is above the media. Unity and secularism are positive values; it should not be difficult to propagate them, they are their own promoters.

Peace and Harmony Vital for Development

Madhavsingh Solanki

IF you pose a question mark to the poor and underdeveloped nations, as to what was basic to their lives the answer would be "Development". And this itself is entirely dependent on peace and harmony, both within nation and amongst nations. As in any society, the brunt of sufferings fell on the weakest and contraction in economic activity in particular would adversely affect this class of society, the greater portion that make up social fibre. Development in this sense, not merely economic or material but something much wider, encompassing all aspects of our universe and of the human personality, could be achieved only when society is not subjected to stress and strains. Peace and harmony as prerequisite for building society to man's measure are by themselves not passive concept but positive one, assuring sustained growth of society at large.

India, after thirty six years of independance has made rapid strides in various fields of development. Apart from continuous efforts made for the development, its pace is basically connected with peace and unity in the country. In this direction, to continue the march of progress, we have to strive hard to maintain peace and national integration.

Today, India is the second most populous and the seventh most extensive country in the world, and in the contemporary context, specially in the newly changing technology of atomic energy space, as also, in gross industrial production, India ranks among leading countries of the world. Our pride in this is all the greater because this nation is an amalgam of many cultures, religions and ethnic groups. This inevitable fact of life is both a source of strength and a cause of weakness. We have to fortify the former and root out the latter.

The variety of our apparel, language and customs, the glaring gaps between the rich and poor, between rural and urban areas, the barriers raised by region and religions, yet, with all these differences, there is no mistaking the impress of India on the people of any religion, any region any stratum of society. The same national heritage and the same set of moral and mental qualities determine the behaviour of all. This is in amazing cultural oneness. That is why, whatever internal divisions, dissensions and conflicts we may have had in India in the past the concept of India, as one country has remained. Such a concept did not perhaps matter so much in the old days. But the concept of the unity does matter today when we must be integrated nationally as well as emotionally.

National integration is the internal defence of the country. No country can ignore its defence. The citizens of the country has to play an important role in national integration. If the citizens are peaceful and united the country's internal defence remains sound.

We in India are an ancient people, we are fortunate that the greatest of our saints and rulers regarded the country as one. Even when we were split into different political states we had the consciousness of being Indians. Whenever there was disunity it cost us dear, in economic and political terms.

The lessons of history and the compulsions of contemporary life demand that the utmost emphasis be placed on political unity. All of us belong to some religion, we are born in some part of India, we have a particular mother tongue. But none of this should come in the way of our Indianness, of our being Indian.

We are good Indians, while being good Hindus or Muslims or Christians or Sikhs or member of any other religion. Our duty as citizens does not ask us to disown our religions or other loyalty. We can practice the faith of our choice, speak the language of our choice and at the same time perform our duties as citizens equally diligently. India is a secular state, one's religion is one's private affair. As Indians we must accord equal honour to them. Every religion should be looked upon with respect.

National integration means the feeling of belonging to one another—not only of belonging to one's country. We have to guard against rise of communalism, regionalism, casteism, ignorance of many kinds, and many tendencies which divide and break rather than join and strengthen.

Violence is mankind's greatest enemy. Whether it is violence in international relations or violence in civic and personal affairs. The occu-

rance of violence brings a bad name to the country as a whole. Our experience shows that violence creeps into agitations, it harms the country, and retards the developmental process. Our efforts have always been to see that every community and every region receives justice and a fair share of the total wealth and resources of the country. If the agitations on which so much money is spent were not there we could have made faster progress.

During recent times there many voices are being raised which make us feel that the strength and unity of the country is threatened. But, the sense of unity in the country is very strong.

Survival and advancement are the main concerns of any country and national unity is the key to both. For this, the nation has developed its composite personality with its many facets and yet with an enduring unity.

We have to be alert and see that under no circumstance our unity is disrupted by anyone. When we work unitedly we shall be able to march forward on the road to progress and development. Despite our varied beliefs and ideas, despite our different thoughts and philosophies, we should strive to usher in a prosperous nation. Let us conscientiously dedicate ourselves to the task of maintaining peace and harmony and ensure the prosperity of the country.

Common Affinities for A Harmonious Society

K. G. Deshmukh

THERE is a difference between a society that has seemingly achieved most of its pronounced goals and thus begins to doubt the very directions of its utopia (as in the West), and one that can still look forward to a long process of realising its goals and ideals. The latter presents an exciting panorama, one that may prove, frustrating at times, for it is a race with time itself, but it is also one, where the mainsprings are futuristic and where there is no scope for complacency or self-doubt". This, very pragmatic observation should serve as an ideal beginning for the treatment of the theme "National integration and Secular Polity". Quite obviously, the Indian situation today belongs to the second category as we observe the "exciting panorama" around us, every day. National integration thus becomes our first and foremost concern for without it, neither democracy nor socialism can have any meaning, in the Indian context.

The upsurge of nationalism in Afro-Asian countries has been, one of the major events of twentieth century history. Nationalism is a very strong factor, though there is for us the UNO and other international bodies). Nationalism can be interpreted in several ways. For Marxists and those who believe in other ideologies, it may appear to be a narrow creed, but it has been a very potent factor in modern Indian history. Our entire freedom struggle was inspired by this ideal of Nationalism or National unity under the leadership of Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru. The partition of India was a heavy cost that we had to pay for our internal differences and hostility. Therefore the theme of National unity has been uppermost in the minds of our leaders. Gandhiji was the saddest person when India was fragmented along communal lines because for him communal harmony was a basic tenet. Pandit Nehru as an idealist and dreamer, had a very lofty vision of Indian National unity. He conceived it in terms of "Unity in diversity."

Ours is a vast land, with several creeds, communities and religious beliefs. This diversity gives our land a richness and variety of cultural attitudes and forms. And yet the underlying unity is of supreme importance for our national survival. According to Pandit Nehru, the great evils of Indian public life are "provincialism, casteism and communalism" which represent major threats to Indian stability and democracy. In a press conference held on October 12, 1947, Pandit Nehru made these objectives very clear in these terms.

"We can only think of secular non-communal democratic state, in which every individual, to whatever religion he may belong, has equal rights and opportunities".

From time to time, during the last thirty six years, there have been threats to our national life—both external and internal and yet, as a whole, we have survived as a strong united nation. In order to promote this idea, amongst our people, a National integration committee was formed in 1961, under the Chairmanship of Mrs Indira Gandhi, to uphold the concept of Indian unity.

It can be however, argued, how far secularism and democracy are entirely Indian concepts. For some political Scientists, both these are essentially Western concepts, grafted on a tradition-bound Indian society. Secularism in the West, was a product of very special situation created by the rise of the Charistian Church and the consequent struggle between the church and the state. There are other thinkers who believe that certain elements of the secular state have a lodg tradition in Indian history—and in its support they point out the wide prevalence of religious tolerance in India—the idea of treating the entire world as one signle family". Between these two extreme points of view, is the background of Indian history or the past which makes it obvious, that we can not look too much to the past, which has its blemishes. It is more worth while looking to the present and the future.

A secular state, according to Smith is :

"A state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion, nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion".

We in India, often live in a world of illusion, believing that we are ideally secular. It is only when communal riots erupt that we are shocked that secularism is still the ideal to be pursued. Article 25 of our constitution guarantees certain basic religious freedom, yet it may not prove to be

an adequate safeguard against possible disastrous future. For secularism must be accepted by the society within which our laws operate. As a critic observes, "In India a secular state is trying to operate in a society which is largely non-secular". In order to remove this confusion, in 1976, there was the 42nd Amendment of our constitution, which was of a special significance. According to this amendment India was to be a sovereign democratic socialist secular Republic.

Secularism is closely linked up with the central theme of national integration. According to a historic A.I.C.C. Resolution, "Secularism is a priceless heritage of our country and is the foundation on which a progressive modern state can be built for the welfare of the common man". Thus we have to assimilate this concept of secularism. In a very perceptive article published in *"The Time of India"*, December, 19, 1982, Editor, Girilal Jain, explains this idea more elaborately. He describes Hinduism as not even a way of life, for it incorporates within it several ways of life just as it provides for any number of gods and goddesses and paths to salvation. Tracing the growth of Indian intelligentsia in the modern times, Jain points out that "such a people could have no difficulty in accepting the Western idea of a modern state based on the recognition of the individual as the basic political unit. Without this foundation, the Indian constitution could not have survived". This recognition of the individual as the basic political unit has been accompanied by other developments—the spread of modern education, the growth of commerce and industry, and with them, of more and more bigger and bigger urban centres which have reinforced the trend towards individualism. This has inevitably led to social instability and the erosion of the hold of old norms. Social disruption is an inescapable price for social mobility and progress. The new entity known as a nation cannot also be built on any other foundation" (*ibid*).

Prof. V.K. Sinha, in an article "Secularism and Indian Democracy" nearly sums up this situation in terms of three questions :

1. Is the Indian tradition conducive for the growth or working of a modern democratic and secular state ?
2. To what extent have the policies followed by the British in India before independence and by the Indian Government since then, secularized the Indian society ?
3. What are the forces that threaten the growth of secularism ?

Answer to the first two questions cannot be given adequately in this paper because they will cover a very long area of Indian history as also present day politics creating controversy or disputes. But third question can be dealt with adequately in the second part of our discussion.

The forces that thwart the growth of national integration and secularism are many. They can be enumerated as under :

1. The gradual but perceptible shift of power from urban to rural India making our country politically modern, yet socially traditional.
2. Recurrence from time to time of religious revivalism.
3. Casteism.
4. Communalism.
5. Language barriers.
6. Regionalism and regional imbalances.
7. Resort to non-constitutional method of political action.

1. The shift of power from urban to rural India is, quite obviously, a consequence, of our emphasis on decentralisation. Politically, we have opted for Western style democracy, and yet we remain on the social plane, very conservative and orthodox. Social discriminations abound in our village life ; there is a hierarchy of caste, creed, colour and race, which is always so potent. The average person thus lives between two worlds one is the world of his ancient hoary past with its various customs and rituals, another is the world of modern democracy and allied political concepts.

“Localism” is a strong factor as the “winds of change” are slow to reach our rural country side. Gandhiji believed that real India is rural India, and it is here that we must evaluate the success of our experiments with democracy and secularism. ‘Modernity’ in our village is very much a matter of gadgets, of transistors and two-wheelers, as an attitude or a temper of mind, it is conspicuous by its absence. It is, therefore, an imperative task to carry this message of national unity and secularism to these remote villages where illiteracy ignorance and poverty abound.

Religious Revivalism, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh so much in evidence from time to time, though a part of communalism, has to be noted separately, for it exhibits extreme features or distortions. It appears to arrive in waves, more often as a reaction. Only very recently, we have witnessed the latest example of Hindu revivalism in the shape of *Bharat-yatra* of Swamis, carrying the *Ganga* water to all the corners of our country.

Such religious displays be it Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, are instantly popular leading often to a mass hysteria. Muslim revivalism is also in evidence, mostly in North-India. It attempts to draw parallels with the brand of 'fundamentalism' which is sweeping the Muslim world recently. Revivalism is reactionary, hardly in tune with modern thinking, it is a vain attempt to romanticise the past. With the sway of this 'wave', independent thinking and national perspective became the best casualties. For many, it acts as a wish—fulfillment, a somewhat negative response to the present challenges, causing severe damage to our ideal of secularism.

Casteism has proved to be the greatest bane for national unity and secularism. Pt Nehru has observed that "a caste-ridden society is not properly secular". We must examine this problem considering the historical relationship of the caste system to the Hindu religion and the State. There is a technological base for the origin of the caste system in the later Rigvedic period. From this emerged the concept of '*dharma*'—either religious duty or law. The central concept of Hindu religious thought has been closely associated with caste duty. As Donald. E. Smith observes, "there is nothing in Hindu thought comparable to the Western conception of natural law". Another Hindu conception, which undergirds the caste system is *karma* thus justifying caste-inequalities as being part of the divine order of the universe. The result is the feeling that "a Hindu without a caste is almost contradiction in terms".

Many social and religious reforms have made attempts to separate caste from religion, yet this problem has assumed dangerous proportions today. Our secular State disregard the individuals caste in the same way that it disregards his religion in defining the rights and duties of citizenship. The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law, or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India" And further, "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them" Articles 15 (1). Yet as Donald. E. Smith points out 'legislation alone is not likely to be effective in eradicating untouchability, for in Indian villages, caste-orthodoxy is largely unchallenged.' (*Ibid*).

In *Discovery of India* Pt. Nehru observed. "In the context of society today—, the caste system and much that goes with it are wholly incompatible. Reactionary, restrictive and barriers ... to progress. There can be no equality in status and opportunity within its framework nor can there be political democracy, and much less, economic democracy. Between these two conceptions, conflict is inherent and only one of them can survive." (page 254).

Yet inspite of these guidelines, at some fundamental points, this policy has been defective. Various other factors also come in the way. The basic fact is that our social life is still based on caste divisions”.

When individual moves into the area of politics, it is ridiculous to imagine that the basic assumption of his social existence can be left behind. When the masses move into the area of active political participation through adult sufferage, caste loyalties and prejudices go with them” this comment by Donald. E. Smith deserves special consideration.

Democratic politics has given a new dimension to our caste system, thus weakening the base of national solidarity and secularism. Caste identity marks for block voting as there are appeals to caste loyalties. The political role of the caste-system is too obvious to-day, so much so that, Jay Prakash Narayan was constrained to state thatt “caste has become the strongest party in India”. This style of politics is entirely alien to the ideals of a secular society. One can only hope that in the long run, education, economic development and nationalism will push caste into background and ultimately eliminate it. Till then, the caste-factor is likely to affect the process of national integration and secularism.

Communalism posses the greatest threat to India's Unity and secularism, yet “to discuss the sociology of communalism, it is necessary to see where the roots of communalism lie.” And for this we must examine Hindu-Muslim maladjustment in a historical perspective. The relations between the two communities during the medieval period were too complex, yet on the whole there was no communal animosity, though the two lived as distinct cultural groups—the state was not theocratic. However, with the advant of the British rulers, the Hindus advanced educationally and profited, the muslims remained educationally backward and suffered for it. When the threat of Westernized Indians became obvious, the British rulers began patronising the Muslims. When the freedom movement was launched, the backward Muslims were more dependent on the British than the Hindus. Thus grew the seeds of separatism, for this there were many causative factors chief among them can be broadly called ‘Hinduization’ of the freedom movement. Against this background, was born the Muslim league and the demand for partition.

The development of communalism, since independence, as a constant threat to secularism must take into account the scenerio described above. In a climate of distrust and hostility, Muslims, the largest minority, felt insecure. Also there has been a resurgence of revivalism and a recrudescence of obscurantism mentioned earlier. There was also the growth of caste-communalism. With caste associations springing up at state, district

or village levels, transforming themselves into pressure-groups and vote banks.

The emergence of communal and caste organisations all over India, is detrimental to our national interests and secular ideals. We are too close to present day happenings to view them objectively, but the sad fact remains that communalism has proved a serious threat for secular polity.

On the question of language too, there are sharp differences, the North and South being almost at opposite ends, as regards our national language, Hindi is conceived. The position is clear, Hindi has been accepted as our state language, with English being given an indefinite lease to serve as a 'link' language. Yet whenever the pace of Hindi has been accelerated in the South there have been violent language-riots and hostility—a new variety of language—chauvinism. On the official level, there has been needless delay and indecision, the Sanskritised variety of Hindi has been an anathema for the Southerners.

The two-language formula, the regional language and Hindi at the national level has produced political social and cultural distortions. The three language formula, with English added as a bridge, appears to work well, though it is doubtful, how long the nation, will depend upon English as a solution for our problems of national unity. The Politicalisation, of the language issue since independence has now become a matter of constant and serious concern for our leadership.

Regionalism, which is only a manifestation of the strained Centre-state relationship, has also proved to be a powerful factor, against national integration. Some time it leads to an attitude of confrontation which is most unhealthy. Every region/state in India, has its own characteristics—the language, the Socio-economic factors. The attitudes are different. Every state thus tries to preserve its peculiar identity, which it has evolved through history and tradition. But then over and above there is the preservation of national unity, very often there are complaints about regional imbalances and neglect by the centre. During the last decade or so, regional politics has become very active. For a vast country like India, with its enormous population, variety of languages, local cultures, racial and ethnic groups, and differing socio-economic realisation, a strong central authority becomes quite imperative for holding together these ever-growing demands.

It is also essential at the same time that due recognition should be given to the needs and urges of various regions in our country. Today

these problems are confined to states or regions in the south or the North, where the State Government have different political affiliations. Only recently the communal and sectarian, seek to divide loyalties of a people who are yet to think the basis of their immemorial culture and to fix their gaze on a confident future. In this context, nationalism and secularism, become duties rather than rights, The greatness of the country is reflected through its people for as Muir points out," a nation is a body of people, who feel themselves to be naturally linked together, by certain affinities which are so real and strong for them that they can live happily together, are dissatisfied when disunited, and can not tolerate subjection to people who do not share their ties."

The task of national integration and secular polity, obviously is to look for common affinities—real and strong—so that inspite of temporary threats, India can continue to march ahead towards prosperity and peace.

The Indian vision of nationalism was never narrow or jingostic for in the words of Pt. Nehru :

"we aim at a string free and democratic India, where every citizen has an equal place and full opportunity of growth and survive, where present-day inequalities in wealth and status have ceased to be, where our vital impulses are directed to creative and cooperative endeavour."

In such an India, communalism, separatism, isolation, untouchability, bigotry and exploitation of man by man has no place and while religion is free it is not allowed to interfere with the political and economic aspects of a nation's life."

Regional Imbalances to be Corrected

J.M. Choudhury

POLITICAL development, recognition of the States on linguistic basis and adoption of regional language by them upset the idea which the founding fathers had in mind while framing the Indian constitution. The Preamble to the constitution begins with the words "We the People", and lays emphasis on justice social, economic and political in a sovereign socialistic secular democratic republic for all. But it seems centrifugal forces are raising their heads here and there trying to weaken the bond of unity of India. Secession, separation, fragmentation are talked of for the preservation and protection of regional identity and sometimes to obtain popular support by the politicians. So national integration has become a topic of utmost importance for us. When the government at the Centre and in the majority of the States were under the control of one political party, the constitution of India was praised as an unique democratic constitution. But with the fragmentation of the country on linguistic basis, controversies started.

Subjects like Centre-State Relations unitary or federal Government at the Centre, more autonomy for State Governments etc. are debated in various platforms by scholars and politicians. Regional parties with local bias have succeeded in forming governments in some of the States.

If we trace the history of the human civilization, we see that the battle of survival had taught human beings to cluster together in homogeneous groups for mutual dependence to fight natural adversaries, hostile groups and enemies. It was only some 6000 years back, that concept of integration of groups under one monarch and concept of a kingdom with

one language, religion and culture gradually developed. However, the most powerful group provided the king and dictated the terms of integration. It is only in the 18th Century that the concept of secular democratic republic was developed granting all citizens equal rights and privilege irrespective of caste, religion or language.

Many scholars express the view that India is not a nation. It is a conglomeration of several nationalities, it is multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural. Attempts were made from time to time to unify the country. Two thousand two hundred year ago, emperor Ashoka was successful to some extent in establishing unity in the country. Chandra Gupta Maurya and Samudragupta also attempted at the unification of the country. Under British subjugation, the multiple nationals and races lost their identities and India under British rule appeared to the outside world as something unified and its entire population as one people.

During the struggle for independence, Indians had only one thought supreme in their mind. It was to drive out the foreign powers from the soil of India. This was a big unifying force to rally people around one national leader. Politicians spoke eloquently of Indian unity in diversity. The man who played a key role in arousing the feeling of nationalism among the millions of Indians was Mahatma Gandhi. He was undoubtedly a great nation builder trying to bring into existence an Indian nation. After Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Azad, Pant, Shastri were other all India leaders who looked for the development of an united India after independence. After their departure from the Indian horizon, Indian politics is very much dominated by leaders of political parties which have regional importance only.

After independence, with driving force to keep the millions bound together, the different nationalities are now claiming that their identities must be maintained, preserved and protected. The discontents voiced by people of different parts of India are acting as centrifugal forces threatening India's unity. The States are feeling deprived of their legitimate revenues and are neglected in economic developments. With the formation of linguistic states and the introduction of regional language, local patriotism developed and young generation of the seventies are getting restless with the slow rate of progress around them.

National Integration is the biggest problem in northeastern India. The people that live in this region are most picturesque, the like of which is not found elsewhere in the world. In the paper I intend to discuss the problems of northeast India, since the ethnic problems and environments are unique.

To understand the problems, it is necessary to know the historical background and the stages of development of the northeastern region of India. Assam the northeastern state of India came under British occupation only in 1826, almost a century after the establishment of British raj in India. Northeast region has international frontiers with Bhutan, China, Burma and Bangladesh now. The region is therefore extremely polyglot in character with many ethnic elements and monogoloid races. It is probably from the 3rd millennium B.C. onwards that the great Sino-Tibetan speaking people started to migrate into this northeastern region mainly along the western course of the Brahmaputra river. It is believed that the great Bodo-tribe of Assam established itself over the Brahmaputra valley very early in time. The other northern tribes such as Aka, Dafla, Miri and Abor are presumed to have come later and made their settlements in the mountains to the north of Brahmaputra plains, which were already occupied by the Bodos, Austrics and the Dravidians. Subsequently, all these various tribes and races—the Bodos the Austrics, the Dravidians along with the Aryan speaking elements from the west and the Ahoms (Thai Tribe) together finally transformed themselves to the Assamese speaking masses of the Brahmaputra Valley. Assam or Kamarupa as it was known in the past thus played a significant role in absorbing the Indo-Mongoloid elements in the formation of the North Indian people. The Naga, the Manipuri, the Mizo and the Kuki and a large number of ethnically different tribes and races live in the hills on the eastern and southern borders of the region.

In the mediaval times, this northeastern region was ruled by a number of indigenous dynasties in separate independent territories. The Ahoms who came from Burma side ruled the area lying in the east for over 600 years and had treated relations with all the neighbouring states for co-existence. When the Britishers came in the 19th Century, they not only conquered the Ahom kingdom but annexed all the neighbouring states and territories also and formed the province of Assam. The Britishers had one administrative officer to rule the whole region but gave protective political safe-guards to the economically under-developed and ethnically different tribes and races against exploitation by more advanced people. So even though, the Britishers integrated the various territories into one unit, the hills and plains people were segregated from the beginning. After independence, the states of Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya and union territories of Arunchal Pradesh and Mizoram have been created from one administration unit and separate administrative heads were appointed. Later on the Government of India formed the North Eastern Council to coordinate the various developmental activities of the whole region.

The bulk of the population of the northeast except the people of the plains were isolated and secluded from the main system of Indian culture and activities. This was due to the ethnic, religious and historical reasons. The foreign missionaries who did a lot of socio-religious work in the hills under patronage of British rulers also guided the socio-political thoughts of these people and encourage segregation from the plains people belonging to other religions. So, after independence, there was no binding force to keep the people of the northeast region belonging to different ethnic, cultural and racial groups together. Centrifugal forces played a major role in the disintegration of the erst-while province of Assam. Political consciousness developed rapidly among the tribal population. Their aspirations varied between complete severance of all political ties with India and formation of small administrative units for homogeneous groups of communities. Drastic reorganisation of the administrative setup had to be initiated to fulfill some of the political aspirations of the people. It cannot, however, be emphatically said that after the reorganisation and formation of new states and union territories in the northeast, the problems of tribal and hill people and plains people have been solved once for all. The fragmentation of the erst-while province of Assam to form seven sisters, based on ethno-cultural groups and languages was done to discourage any dormant centrifugal force for sucession or separation. It seems the remedy has not proved successful as the disease is still persisting.

Centrifugal forces have also touched the hearts of many people of Assam because of lack of developments in the spheres of economy, industry and communications. Assam even after dismemberment has two distinct regions, the plains and the hills, inhabited by different races professing different religion, speaking different languages and having conflicting interests. The plains of Assam include the Brahmaputra valley and the Cachar districts with people of different languages and cultures. Although Assamese is the dominant race living in the Brahmaputra Valley, there are good number of Bengali who came some 100 years ago along with the British administrators, a large number of tea-garden labour population brought mostly from central India by the European Teaplanter, the Nepali settlers and a sizeable population of immigrant muslims and refugees from the esrt-while East Bengal.

The Rajasthani business and trading community has also spread far into the rural areas to control trade and commerce. The Cachar districts are mostly inhabited by the Bengali speaking people along with people of the adjoining regions. Although Assamese is the state Regional language Bodo, Bengali, Hindi and Nepali languages are also read by a large section of students in schools and colleges.

The tribal people of the hills and the plains of Assam are also heterogeneous and have linguistic and cultural peculiarities. The Karbis, the Bodos and the Dimasas are asking for recognition as special units.

The Muslim population constitutes about 25 per cent of the Assam's total populations of 14.6 million according to 1971 census. The majority of the tribal people and the tea-garden labourers are christian. The influx of migrant population from the neighbouring western states has greatly affected the population ratio with respect to language, religion and culture during the last 20 years. The recent agitation in the Brahmaputra Valley is due to influx of Hindu as well as Muslim foreign nationals from the East Pakistan and Bangladesh into Assam. These foreign nationals have culture and language very much different from the indigenous native Assamese people and so the local Assamese population is very much alarmed at this tremendous influx of aliens into their land effecting their culture and socio-economic conditions.

The historical background of the northeast region is given above, in order to help the reader to appreciate the complex problems of integration in the region. Happenings in this region of India are looked upon in official and uofficial quarters either as secession or as disruption. The tribal population are seeking autonomy and safeguards of their ethnic and cultural peculiarities. The others are trying to safeguard their culture, language and socio-economic patterns from being wiped out by alien cultural. The younger generation is very much disappointed at the lack of industrial progress and slow rate of development compared to the other parts of India. Today's youths of northeastern India are bewildered and bitter because they are deprived of many opportunities and their problems are not appreciated by the elders, politicians and the governments at the centre or state. Centrifugal forces are therefore observed here and there. There is resurgence among the youths.

Under the above historical as well as geo-political situations, how to achieve National Integration among the diverse races and people is a big problem. Indian culture and society had lasted over 5000 year cemented together by bonds of tolerance and magnanimity of the people. There has been unity in diversity. But centrifugal forces are seen to raise their heads here and there for various causes and unless these are quickly nipped in the bud, the damage that may be caused will be irreparable. Our aim should be to formulate measures which will promote harmonious relations among different sections of the population. Our past experience has shown that a monolithic structure even after full integration will break down into fragments in no time, if the constituent elements do not have

mutual trust, magnanimity of heart and respect for others sentiments and feelings.

In the northeastern region, castism is not a problem but the policy of reservations and safeguarding interests of minorities have segregated the the different factions of the population rather than integrating them into a homogeneous society. Sound economic planning, equitable distribution of resources, development of industries irrespective of profit, sharing of natural resources etc. should be given highest priorities, so that every region feels that it is an equal partner with the others and an integral part of the whole.

Many suggestions have been given regarding the federal character of the Indian constitution. States should not feel that they have been neglected or deprived of central assistance because of geographical distance or policy differences with the centre. The national leaders will render better service to the country if they act as national leaders representing the population of India irrespective of caste, creed or religion and see to the development of India as a whole and not of the constituencies they represent.

In a democratic set up the electors play a major role in guiding the policy of the elected leaders. Even then, the national leaders should concern themselves with problems of the whole nation and should not confine their activities to the constituencies only.

Education should play a major role in developing the spirit of nationalism and national integration right from the school to the university stages. The radio, television, the Press and other media should also highlight such events which have bearing on national integration and on the greatness of India as nation of the world.

Transport and communication facilities are to be improved for facilitating easy movement of commodities and for increase in trade and commerce. People should also be permitted to move freely within the northeastern region but proper and adequate safeguards are also necessary against exploitation of simple indigenous people by the sophisticated advanced races. The mighty Brahmaputra River had no bridge across it along its 860 K.M. course through the northeast till 1962 and the whole

of the northeast has only 10 K.M. of broadguage railways till now for development of trade, Commerce and industry. It is good to note that the North Eastern Council is laying more emplasis for generation of energy and development of communication by building a few more bridges recently. Universities and Institutions of higher education and research are to be established in the different units of the northeast to expose the younger generations to the advancement of science, philosophy and technology and for bringing them in contact with All-India and and International Schools. These exposures will widen their outlook and extend the horizons of knowledge.

Ethical, Political and Legal Aspects of National Integration

M. H. Beg

When Aristotle said that man is a Political animal, he meant that he is a social animal who willy nilly, has to build an ordered society through his culture which reflects in each age and society the human urge for integration. Anthropologists have defined culture as all “communicable knowledge” and have written volumes on various aspects of it such as ethics, religion, economics, politics, law, aesthetics. It is true that, in early stages of society, the ethical aspect is clouded by the dominance of fear for the awesome and obedience to an authority based on physical force or might. But, as society advances, intelligent social consciousness and needs of social welfare, as the roots of the ethical sense of right and wrong, are perceived to be the real bases of social order whose structure is reduced to the form of a system of law providing the skeleton which supports the society for which it is meant. The translation of ethical norms into legal rules of conduct takes place through the channel of what is known as politics.

The dominant character of politics itself changes from age to age and with the nature of society where it prevails. Montesquieu had classified the dominant characteristics of each society by the nature of government which prevailed in it and the spirit required to sustain it in his well known work known as “*L’ esprit des Lois*”. Each politico-legal order had an animating spirit and a perverted form resulting from the loss or diminution of that spirits. The spirit underlying a society in which the monarchical form of government exists was benevolence. Its perverted form was tyranny whose dominant characteristic was rule by instilling fear. The dominant spirit of an Aristocratic order was honour and chivalry.

Its perverted form was Oligarchy characterised by vice, selfishness, cliquishness, and exploitation. The dominant spirit of a healthy democracy was what Montesquieu called "Virtue" requiring integrity and patriotism, or, in other words, all that we would like to cover by the needs of National Integration. The late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, a great seer and scholar statesman of this century, defined democracy as "self-discipline". He said "the more the self discipline, the less is the imposed discipline".

Now, law gives the requirements of the imposed discipline as well as certain rules as means for achieving certain ends of a welfare state and its "Social Engineering". These are first determined in the realm of ethics. If our ethical norms are perverted by either the unscrupulous scramble for power in the political arena where, if what is known as the law of the jungle is allowed to prevail and the only principle followed by the contenders for power seems to be found in the Maxim that "all is fair in love and war", the result is bound to be that, even where certain basic ethical norms have been given the form of law, the norms remain merely on paper and are not enforced. The social order, whatever be the form of government in it, starts travelling down a slope which carries it towards disintegration.

It would, therefore, appear that, if we want to correct the ethical standards or improve our system of government or any of our laws, the political arena will have to be cleansed of unscrupulousness and wedded to principles. This appears to be a task to which the educated, the enlightened, and the thoughtful, such as have assembled here, will have to address themselves very seriously. They will have to come out of their self-imposed detachment.

When we made our "tryst with destiny", as the late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru put it, we agreed upon certain basic principles incorporated in our Constitution. The terms of the basic agreement or the consensus between all political parties are indicated by the Preamble to our Constitution, the Fundamental rights, and the Directive Principles of State Policy. The Directive Principles, though not justiciable, were to guide the law making organs in particular. Perhaps the most basic requirement for the success of our Constitution and its objects is National Integration.

The Preamble speaks of the integrity of the nation. Our laws relating to citizenship do not recognise dual citizenship. There is only one citizenship for all Indian citizens wherever they may reside. There is no

separate State citizenship. To attempt to confine citizenship to any particular religion or to persons fulfilling any particular religious or residential qualifications or to cultural or linguistic tests would strike at the basics integrity of the nation contemplated by our Constitution.

I may mention here that I have held the view that neither the Constitutional document nor any of the laws can be properly interpreted unless the judiciary, which has to perform that task, also shares the socio-economic and political philosophy, which produced the Preamble, the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Fundamental Rights, as well as an often forgotten part, the duties and obligations of citizens enumerated in Part IV-A of the Constitution. I think it has an important part to play in asserting and faithfully and boldly declaring what the integrity of the nation implies.

I, however, do not hold the view that either the law or their interpretations by Judges are enough or that they could remain changeless. I think that one of the most basic of human rights is the right to change. A change in the right direction may be called development. I subscribe to the view that the right of the people as a whole to change, which is collective, is more weighty than individual rights. It is found concentrated in the shape of a power to change even the basics. This power is contained in Art. 308 of the Constitution. No doubt, there are basics of the Constitution as there are of any other law, such as International Law, at a particular time. But, I think that all these basics are subject to change. The power to change rests in the hands of the people and their legislative organs and not of Judges despite the great deal of judicial legislation they may be capable of. Therefore, it is the consciousness of the people to needs of National Integration which has to be aroused by the thoughtful and enlightened amongst as if we want better National Integration through beneficial changes.

The legal connotation of our secularism, which is one of the implications of National Integration, will be found in Art. 14 of the Constitution and the various other articles which work out the basic rule contained in Art. 14 which says :

“Art. 14. Equality before law—The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India”.

One of the basic features of our secular State is the separation between politics and religion. If such basics are transgressed, the Constitution is violated.

As one who has had to think and read a good deal on questions relating to human rights on which he had to lecture in various parts of the world, I am strongly of the view, expressed also by Prof. Brizenzeski, who was an Advisor to President Carter of USA, that the Human Rights' Movement is an "historical inevitability". I believe that, together with a revival of the Greek notions of natural law in a new form given, to it by the modern Human Rights' Movement, it possesses the greatest potentiality, in the field of law, for integrating us as human beings into nations whose individuals could rise above loyalties to creed, caste, race, region, or nationality.

The expanding embrace of universalism and humanism, despite the development of new antagonisms, must manifest itself in the field of law also. The results of a Human Rights' Movement and of a new Natural Law philosophy get increasingly embodied in our Constitutional as well as inter-national laws.

I do not subscribe to the rather extreme views of my brother Judge Dwivedi in Kesvananda Bharati's case implying that Natural law doctrines are too elusive to be at all useful to lawyers.

I think that the preamble and Chapter III on Fundamental Rights, taken together with the Directive Principles of State Policy in Chapter IV, lay down the road to national integration through "Justice ; Social, Economic and Political". Norms established by the laws as well as by the wider field of ethics must be respected by politicians, administrators and lawyers alike. What is ethically good and right is what we have to get hold of whether we dispense justice, or, in any way, administer law, or, take part in the law making process as politicians.

I would like to end by quoting from a book by the American Prof. H.J. Blackham on "Political Discipline in a Free Society". Among many statements he makes is this :

"Current social analysis tend to be gloomy. We are tormented by dilemma and confused by paradox : on the one hand, we are over-

organized and stifled, on the other, we are not organized enough to keep anything under control : unprecedented expenditure on security buys unprecedented insecurity ; and all this unbearably familiar kind of frustrations whether they induce sluggishness or anger, scepticism or anxiety, the consequences are uniformly unhealthy”.

Our objective should be is to ponder over and formulate those rules of conduct, whether ethical or legal, which could remove the causes of this ill-health and dispel some reasons for our gloom be they grounded in ethics, politics, or law, or elsewhere. Neither politics nor law should be divorced from good ethics which should control and direct both politics and law. Indeed, even where law is wanting, sound rules of ethical conduct should regulate the actions of all individuals. For example, personal attacks on political leaders, apart from criticism of policies they represent, should be considered so unethical that no respectable politician should resort to it. And, if he does indulge in mere malicious character assassinations, unsupported by any credible facts, the pulic should penalise such conduct quite apart from what courts could do.

Equality of Protection and Opportunities

J. H. Talyav Khan

OUR country, India, of which Sikkim is an endeared part, is an astonishing example of the orchestration of all tunes, of all instruments of all voices, whatever their language, community, religion, caste or creed.

The mould of spirituality and secularism in which we are cast make for that pristine awareness of oneness and Indianness which has existed from times immemorial and is not only of recent origin.

It has put us on guard against the hazards, the distress, the evils of separationism and secessionism which sensationalists try to exploit. But our defences are too strong to let them get the better of it.

Our strongest point is that India assures equality of protection and opportunities for all minorities and backward classes.

All communities are full and equal partners in national life—its politics, production processes, commerce, defence, education, arts, literature and self-expression.

But as our Prime Minister has said eternal vigilance is vital. Every section of society has a role of responsibility.

Teachers and educationists in particular are the trustees of the future generations, the directors, the instructors, the sympathisers, the people who inspire the student world who, by and large, repose their faith and future, with all their heart and soul in their teachers.

So also our social workers and particularly our women's voluntary organizations which are the largest number in the world.

No true religion can conceivably teach hatred of each other's religions. In our country, the manner in which all religions have flourished is an admirable manifestation of our spirit of tolerance, coexistence and fusion divorced from any fissiparous tendencies.

Communal organizations which give a distorted picture must be countered by other bodies with all political, legal and administrative means available.

No party can make any long-term gains out of people's misery. All parties should unite, whatever their political philosophy to make national integration a positive philosophy and not a negative anachronism, so that security, stability, solidarity, secularism through socialism could be guaranteed.

While national integration near certainly communal harmony, treatment of harijans and other backward classes, developments in the North-East have highlighted other ugly features.

In Assam, there is the issue of foreign nationals. It is being patiently sought by Madam and her colleagues to be solved by dialogue and tolerance.

It is necessary, India to achieve national integration to keep in mind in all such troubled areas, the vital importance of the national interests and commitments, international obligations and humanitarian considerations.

In a democracy like ours—the world's largest secular democracy, issues have to be resolved through discussions, and solutions would be found through such deliberations. Such solutions may not be able to please everyone, but may satisfy the majority.

In our North-Eastern Region, a great responsibility falls on political leadership and on our idealistic youth to keep before the people the all India perspective.

There should be no animosities between tribals and non-tribals.

Diverse forces have been trying to disturb the melody or harmony between them for selfish motives.

Our people have lived in amity with each other for generations and should never look on each other with suspicion. Distrust must be demolished. Prejudices and parochialism must perish.

A special characteristic of our country is that no caste or group is ever able to dominate over the whole country.

Our Prime Minister rightly feels that we should convert this to a national advantage to ensure that there is a real and growing relationship of brotherhood and mutual responsibility based on trust.

Then the danger signals which confront us can be switched off for ever. Then national integration will have achieved its goal. Then equality of treatment and of opportunities for all will be assured.

Hindu and Muslims in India : Socio-Economic Relations—A Historical Perspective

Dev Dutt

COMMUNALISM has been defined as “a theory of government based on maximum autonomy for all local groups.¹” But with reference to India, it has been described as “the practice of assigning a certain number of seats in the legislatures to each religious group and to the struggle for power in the form of additional seats.”

This does not fully describe communalism in India. There are in India three additional groups—caste, linguistic and tribe.²

In the mind of all of them there is a “sense of particularism” or “an inordinate awareness” of separate identity which has “suppressed consciousness of a common nationhood and larger national purpose”.³

We are at present concerned with the group particularism of Hindus and Muslims—which, as we know, led to the dismemberment of the sub continent in 1947. In the post-independence era, it brought us humiliation, hardened our sensibilities, slowed down economic progress, choked the process of social reconstruction, distorted our foreign policy perspective and involved a colossal dissipation of human material resources.

Some of us are inclined to believe that the nature of religious communalism and Hindu-Muslim relations is identical all over India. This is not so. But for certain very broad common features, communalism as an approach to social and other questions has not effected Muslims in all parts of India in the same way and with the same intensity.

In other words different cross-sections of the population belonging to one or other community in different parts of the country have been differently effected by communal approach.

Obviously, this is because of the socio-economic developments during the past twelve hundred years in general and nearly two hundred years in particular. For, is it not true that present politics is past history ?

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to over-emphasize riots and other political expressions of communalism. Hindu-Muslim question can but be superficially studied, if we concentrate on its political aspects only. In fact, even as a political problem, it cannot be tackled if we ignore the social and other aspects.

There is one more preception—Communalism or conflict between religious groups in India can not be fully understood within the parameters of liberal or Marxian analytical frame and Aristotolian logic. Otherwise, we are likely to fall into the same error of perception as is clear from the following opinions of eminent political scholars as to what will India look like in fifty years.

Several historians have complimented India about her amazing capacity to absorb innumerable external influences and systems of thought. It has assimilated, we are told, the Greek, the Indian, the Arab, and several other cultural influences.

During the first millennium of the Christian era India developed a rich, vigorous and live social order which offered scope for continuity, change, assimilation and adjustments of new forces. The most outstanding feature of this system is what Nehru calls "multi-community society like multi-national state of Russia." Caste, joint-family and autonomous village community constitute the basic units of this social structure. It is non-competitive. The philosophical and metaphysical foundations of this structure are broad-based and symbolic. In the Indian view of life, reality is not uni-dimensional, but multi-dimensional.

But the entire fabric of Indian culture began to show signs of weakness, nay decadence or ossification in and around ninth century. Shankarayacharya had dealt a deadly blow to Buddhism and restored to Hinduism and Vedantic-philosophy its original supremacy. But in certain parts of India, say, Bengal, Sind, Kashmir, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh where a large number of people could not be drawn into the

process of consolidation initiated by Shankaracharya, they existed on the periphery of Hindu social system. For example, *Chamars*, *Gujjars*, weavers, sweepers, etc., there were also certain nomadic groups. In the Uttar Pradesh and Punjab there were *Nath Panthis* also.

In these areas and among some cross-sections of people, conditions for conversion were propitious. Islam offered social equality which Hinduism denied at that time. Islam entered in India at this critical juncture. Its social structure, its value-system and the outlook it engendered, which were not in tune with that of the dominant Hindu culture, attracted the above mentioned sections of (except *Chamars*) people who could not be integrated within Hindu-fold with dignity and freedom.

Islam, it must be understood, did not spread and penetrate Indian society with the help of sword—though it cannot be denied that coercion did have something to do with it. It has been recognised by several authorities that the penetration of Islam into India by persuasion had begun long before it was in a position to use force. The first contacts of Islam in South India date as far back as 8th century, when some Arabs landed on the west coast as traders and not as missionaries. But... every Muslim considered himself a missionary, and sought and welcomed opportunities for the conversion....⁵

As pointed out by Muzhar-ul-Huq in his Presidential Address to the All India Muslim League in 1915, there were two types of Muslims in India those who were descendants of traders and those who were converts—the former, according to Huq, were 8 million and the latter were 70 million. But converts remained as ignorant of Islam as of Hinduism. They continued to live within the original social structure based on community. Even the migrant Muslims borrowed from the environment of Hindustan. For example, the Muslim rulers accepted the norms of the people, viz., limited government and the autonomy of the people.

Further in economic field, says, Professor N.K. Bose : “In large parts of rural India caste-based organisation of production was so successful for long time that even Muslims were drawn into this structure in a camouflaged way”.⁶

Thus at the ground level, in spite of conversions, the socio-economic structure remained undisturbed within several systems of production which existed side by side : those who lived by hunting and fishing and collecting; those engaged in shifting cultivation in NEFA, Nagaland etc ; those

engaged in household industry and agriculture under caste system. The system, as mentioned above, was non-competitive in which different communities enjoyed hereditary monopoly in respect of particular

weapons.⁷ This localization of caste-based production organisation came into being in the wake of the decay of Moghul rule when the rural people returned in the shell .. tortoise like.⁸

In western and southern India the pattern had an additional point of difference. The original migrants were Arab traders and merchants who are not followers of Islam. On account of their cultural background and economic interests they were different, they belonged to higher and middle classes. There were in the South no dominant feudal classes as created during the Moghul period in the North. Some of the migrants, we are told, were converted on the advent of Islam late.

An empirical study⁹ of techniques and civilization carried in 222 potter villages in 12 Indian States brings out the fact that even now, particularly as late as 1961 in Kashmir, the potters belonging to both communities in North India are "wedded to Brahmanical sacredotalism .." They represent a single compact culture ; its cuts across linguistic barriers and religious beliefs.¹⁰

Several social customs and conventions were common to both the communities e.g. piercing of ears, dress, child-marriage, plastering the floor with cowdung, Hindu rites of marriage, acceptance of common fire and priests, belief in astrology, common geneology (*Gotra*)—particularly in rural areas.¹¹

Religion has had very little effect on their socio-economic relations. For example, in Kashmir as late as 1947 the Muslims in rural as well as in urban areas had common customs in respect of marriage rites, dress, disposal of the dead, worship, their caste and occupational dieties and in respect of certain domestic chores (e.g. plastering the floor with the dung):

In South India there is greater social and cultural integration of Hindus and Muslims. In other parts of India for example, in Barmer district in Rajasthan, we are told by authorities on the subject, the Muslims worship the goddess of fire, they believe in astrology, ghosts.

Even in the field of art, music, architecture, there existed finest quality of emotional integration and aesthetic unity' The finest quality of emotional integration still reigns...in the world of music and dance where a common culture makes brothers of people."

This is also clear from the history of Hindustani music since the times of Tansen. The musical composition are directed to Siva, Krishna and Ganapati. The great muslim signers, such as Naubat Khan, Fayyaz Ahmed, Ghulam Rasool Khan, Gouhar Bai, Vilayat Khan, Aman Ali, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan and many others enriched the music of India and they composed and sang Hindu songs.

"Many are the Muslim musicians who have presented best aspects of their art in temples and shrines. Members of the Dagar family are the traditional signers at the Jagdish temple in Udaipur and the Shrinathji temple, Nathdwara."

Thus on the whole, before the British came to India a majority of Muslims and Hindus lived within a common socio-economic frame work at the ground level—a non-competitive community-oriented production and social system.

A bulk of them belonged to lower classes in North. Feudal classes came up in North India. There were some middle classes and trading elements in South and West India.

But during the period preceding the British there also began a process of inter-action between Islam and Indian polity on the basis of co-existence. It did really give birth to a composite culture. In spite of having co-existed for centuries Hindus and Muslims on the whole remained alienated from each other. This was particularly so in North India.

In spite of the presence of this integrated social cultural and productive system at the grass roots, there is evidence of fierce conflicts between the communities, particularly between feudal elements in the North.

Although territorial and economic and political factors were not weak, these conflicts acquired a religious colour and emphasis in the minds of some people.

Why India, particularly North India, could not integrate Islam and the followers of Islam into its system is a question which historians and sociologists may well like to investigate. But for the students of contemporary India this fact is important as it is.

The British ushered their judicial, administrative and economic systems into the Indian structure. They brought about politico-legal changes which did not accept the authority of the village, the caste and panchayat. This process undermined, nay eliminated, the power of traditional functionaries. It severely damaged the age-old mechanisms of conflict-resolution. The capacity of the people for self-rule diminished.

In pre-British times, land was not a commodity freely sold and purchased. The British created private property in land. Further, "a new... organisation of production entered the field.. commercial capitalism; supported by political authority, it brought about large scale changes in the character of agriculture, trade, commerce and industry.....in different parts of India in a very unequal manner."

This destroyed the caste-based non-competitive production system and capitalistic modes replaced it. Further, the Britishers disrupted the legal and judicial conventions of their predecessors. They unlike the Muslims rulers, introduced *Shariat* and *Mitaksare* and spoiled the composite cultural traditions.

The traditional social order in India was based on hereditary status, of groups.

The other new forces which weakened it were Macaulay's education and the process of introduction of parliamentary institutions by doses.

Some of the major issues for which the political parties and the British government and the vocal section of people showed unremitting concern was those related to number of seats, weightages, reservations, representation of minorities etc., particularly of Hindus and Muslims.

One of the consequences of the economic policy, land policy, legal reforms, educational policy and technological advances under the British was to create a middle class, representing a new set of values, competitions and individualism.

On account of the circumstances of their growth, the members, of the rising middle classes mostly comprised of government servants, lawyers, teachers, doctors and mercantile and industrial elements, (except in Kanpur, Bombay etc.)

In this context, it is necessary to bear in mind that the level from which Hindus and Muslims started on the road to modernization and the way dissolution of the traditional pattern took place differed considerably for Hindus and Muslims. The pace of change also varied. The growth

modern education among Muslims was slow. They could not outgrow their mediæval outlook. For example, they were attracted by Pan-Islamism.

There developed economic cleavages. For instances, in Bengal due to Permanent Settlement, the Hindus held land and Muslims peasantry was poor. But in *Audh* the Muslim feudal aristocracy held its own. It is said 15 per cent of people in U.P. in 1880 retained 30 per cent services in Courts etc.

This process of fractional modernisation in the background of constitutionalism and capitalist economic development, manifested itself in the form of communalism. It is true that in some parts of India, for example, the western and southern India, both Muslims and Hindus gave a positive response¹⁴ to the new developments. Specially, the Muslims, which in these parts, belonged to trading classes did not find much difficulty and consequently the communal problem there was not so acute as in North India. In fact, India's partition was a handiwork of north Indian Muslims under the leadership of secular minded Muslims from West India.¹⁵

However, on the whole this process of modernisation which affected the pre-British balance of forces and which derived its character from the historically built-in inequalities community—wise and region—wise, gave rise to Hindu-Muslim tension. As it has been rightly put, both freedom and division was the handiwork of particularly the middle classes in India¹⁶.

National Movement and the Communalism

An aspect of India's national movement, inside and outside Congress, has been concerned with the solution of this question. Broadly speaking, there were four approaches to reconcile the equation between religion and politics in India.

First : Gandhi tried to resolve the Hindu-Muslim conflict within the frame of reference of religions. He attempted to build nationalism on the basis of harmonious co-existence and reconciliation. However, ideally correct, Gandhi's prescription did not work. The more he tried to press religion in the service of politics, the more rapidly did religion get politicized.

The second approach was based on secularism. Leaders like Nehru believed that the forces of modernization would overpower the forces of religion in India and a secular society will emerge. The experiences of

India during the last so many years do not lend themselves to vindicating this approach. The number of riots between Hindus and Muslims in free India and the new militancy exhibited show that communalism is still a major problem in India.

Thirdly, an attempt was made to make Indians discard religion as opium. A frontal attack on religion was made by the socialists and the communists did not succeed. In fact, at operational level, these parties exploited the religious susceptibilities of the people.

Fourthly, there was the approach underlying the movement represented by the Muslim League and R.S.S. This culminated in the partition of India. At that time the secularists in India—Nehru etc.—thought that partition of the country would ultimately settle the question between Islam and Indian politics. But events have so moved that this anticipation has not come true.

The Hindu-Muslim conflict was rendered as an international question. The externalisation of the problem did not balance the internal equation. In fact, upto the time of emergence of Bangla Desh in 1971, Indo-Pakistan conflict hindered the process of adjustment between Hindus and Muslims

A large cross-section of Hindus in North India have not forgotten that Muslim were responsible for the division of this country.

Similarly, the Muslims have not forgotten that they ruled the country for two or three centuries. 16 (a) So far Hindus as a majority community has suffered from minority complex. A small movement leading to the conversion of Hindus into Christianity, the fear of growth of population of Muslims if they don't accept family planning, a little threat here and there to things which they hold have provoked in Hindus responses which are out of all proportions to what is desired.

Prior to 1971 the question between religion and politics in India remained shaky and unbalanced. Islam continued to exist like an undigested morsel of culture in eastern parts of Indian polity. Particularly communalism in North India represents the aches and pains of this indigestion. Nationalism, as understood in the west and as transplanted in India, was not adequate to assimilate Islam which needed a longer frame. The trends initiated in pre-independence era were accentuated in post-independence period. There was no fresh thinking about communalism in post-Independence era. The development programmes have taken the process of political and economic modernization to the very door steps of the villagers.

The electioneering, as it obtains today, has made matters worse in so far as communalism is concerned. There have been a large number of communal riots in free India than prior to 1947. As is well-known, almost all the political parties exploit, directly or indirectly, communalism for election purposes. They are not capable of doing any fresh thinking on the question. They have stereotyped programmes to offer. Moreover, they really do not represent effective social forces in the country. They have no sanctions, no will, no organizational ability and no claim to fulfil this job. In fact, it is clear, the Parliamentary processes have been used to strengthen communalism.

In Modern times, we are trying to rebuild our productive organisation in terms of science and advanced technology. The resultant changes which are taking place.....at the lowest level.....hunters level and shifting cultivation ideas of land-ownership are replacing the community ownership.

Communal land being parcelled...has sometimes led to an accentuation of class and communal differences, tribal conflict or even tribal nationalism.

As regards, caste-based society...the super-structure associated with caste, which was based on the traditional worship of authority, subordination of the individual to social demandsis slowly giving place to a new kind of freedom and an intensification of individualism. For example with the modernization of technique of production..... an adequate number of unions based upon either interest of trade or of civil services did not grow fast enough even in a city which happened to be the capital of India until 1911.¹⁷

When modern institutions do not grow up fast enough and there is a hang-over of other social identities based upon caste, community, language, etc. people placed under economic strain prefer to resort to the old-fashioned social identities, if the new ones are not adequate enough to take charge of their increasing difficulties...¹⁸ We can say, Communalism is one of those "Old-fashioned identities which is the bye-product of this development.

Concluding remarks

The roots of communalism lie in history and the social and economic and political process generated by modernization. Further, the creative basis of Hindu-Muslims unity evolved in the past was not strengthened.

There was too much of bad politics—party politics—which erroded basis. Therefore, it is necessary to re-discover the bases of unity and assimilative powers and to transform our entire social philosophy and style of social action if any permanent solution is to be found for communalism.

A fresh effort is called for and for this purpose a broad hypothesis may will be presented. Admitting that Indian society is congenitally religious, is it possible to evolve an equation of militant secular nationalism without rejecting religion ?

Is it possible to find a solution which takes cognisance of the religious frame of the mind of Indian people ? In South India, as compared to the North, the question between Hindus and Muslims is more stable and balanced. The concentration of riots and eruption of communal violence in South India's not at all of the same order as that in North India. There has been in fact, no communalism of the variety that we witness in North India. Jan Sangh and RSS have not so far been able to find a foot-hold in the South. Therefore, it will be worthwhile looking for clues to the answer of Hindu Muslim problem by examining the adjustments which Hindus and Muslims in South have evolved and to find out whether it is possible to apply that approach to situations elsewhere in India.

Further, in this connection we give below an account of a discussion on this subject with our leading social scientist, Prof. N.K. Bose. He pointed out that there are three levels at which communalism can be treated.

First, there may be administrative action to handle recrudence of communal violence and other tensions. Second, there is cooperation between political parties. Thirdly, in districts and taluqas there should be non-party effort to promote harmony.

Prof. Bose emphasised the vital importance of constructive action at the level of districts and taluqas, particularly, in those which are located in crucial regions, e.g., Jalagaon, Bhiwandi etc.

It has been suggested that in each district two non-party, individuals of proven integrity and secular-mindedness undertake constructive work among Hindus and Muslims. These persons should settle down to formulate and implement such common local programmes in which the various communities can work jointly and promote common good.

According to Prof. Bose, the live service contacts in day to day life will generate feeling of harmony and create in the long run the basis of unity. There is much wisdom in this approach and, till such time fundamental changes in the structure do not take place, it will be worth while implementing this suggestion.

The emergence of Bangla Desh in 1971 had a salutary effects on the minds of communalists in India—both Hindus and Muslims. In fact, it had a therapeutic effect. It eliminated some of the roots of certain psychic tensions. But the Congress and other secularist forces did not make use of this development.

The March 1977 elections have also brought to surface a very encouraging trend. Hindus and Muslims did not vote on communal lines. In Delhi the leader and followers of RSS and Jamiate-Islamifraternized spontaneously.

We should also carefully analyse all these developments and look for such clues as will enable us to evolve a *modus operandi* for the resolution of Hindu—Muslim question.

NOTES :

1. Dictionary of Sociology.
2. According to some students of Indian Culture, the tribal people as a whole did not share any kind of collective consciousness, as such.
3. S. Abid Hussain, *The Destiny of Indian Muslims*, (Bombay)
4. (i) "Despite my sympathy for India I am not convinced that it can remain united in the long run. The present linguistic units will gradually become independent and the south-western, southern and the south eastern parts of India will almost probably separate into independent states"
—Milvon Djilas
- (ii) "The avowedly democratic society of India may reasonably be counted upon not to unify, but to fragment—possibly into as many parts as western Europe.
—Emmit John Highes
- (iii) "The 150 years of British rule have bound its separate parts together by common legal and political traditions a unified economy and a common struggle for Independence. India will just hang together.
—Lord Trevelyn
- (iv) "Many other western scholars and statesmen too have in the past made similar gloomy prophecies about India. For example, a political commentator, Harrison Seligmen, in his book "The Most Dangerous Decade" published in early sixties had the audacity to say that India will disintegrate so early as the end of sixties.
5. Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims, A Political History, 1958-1947* p. 1
6. N.K. Bose, *Trends of Socio-Economic Change in India, 1871-1971*, (Simla) p. 8.
7. *Ibid*, p. 8
8. *Ibid*, p. 8.
9. Dr. Baidyanath Saraswati, *Pottery-Making Culture and Indian Civilization* (Unpublished), 1970.
10. *Ibid*.
11. For Example the Muslim Thugs adopted Hindu rites.
12. Indra Dev. see note 6.
13. N.K. Bose, n. 6.
14. Abid Hussain, n. 3 p. 17.
15. In the South, educated Muslims and middle classes—descendants of Arab sailors and traders—had naturally a more flexible and open and undogmatic approach. But in the North there were larger bulk of lower classes dominated by feudal elements and values. This made considerable difference to their responses.
16. B.B. Misra, *Indian Middle Classes*, (London, 1962), p. 400.
- 16(a) See Annexure 2,
17. Bose, n. 6,
18. *Ibid*.

ANNEXURE 2

COMMUNALISM

16(a)“For four centuries until the decline of the Moghul Empire in the 18th Century, Muslim rulers dominated the North and Centre of India. The Muslims of S. Asia have never forgotten this and it would be a mistake to underestimate the strength and pervasiveness of this memory...

From 18th century onwards there has been much strange thinking among the Muslims about the cause of the decline and the measures to restore their fallen fortunes (1) upto 1857... They regarded the British as usurpers of Muslim power, and aimed to break that power and restore Muslim ascendancy. (2) Sir Syid's..... aim were to restore Muslim ascendancy. Complete identification with the British. (3) 1910-22-anti-British prevailed over the modernist pro-British and : to free India where the inherent superiority of Islam could not fail to raise its position (4) Breakup Hindu Muslim Unity independent new State.

“What is common to all these trends is the sense of the separateness of the Muslims..... within the overall unity there were different after conflicting trends sufficiently *distinct from one another*.....

1. All India outlook strongest in Delhi, the Moghul capital..... derived from all India imperial tradition.....

2. Bengal there developed a close interpenetration of Islamic sentiment with what one may call Bengali-protonationalism..... markedly plebian (c/f articuratic in values in North-west)..... Specifically Bengali element in Muslim consciousness in N.Ebecause.....“geographical remoteness” deprived them of the opportunity to draw constantlyon the reservoir of manpower in Iran and Central Asiaimpelled them to strengthen their position by an appeal to local feelinga popular dynasty of Buddhist king had recently been over thrown by an orthodox Hindu one, hostile to the plebian values and plebian culture to correct Buddhism had been sympathetic and correspondingly unpopular with the people of Bengal. Islam with its egalitarian doctrine made a ready appeal and the non-Muslim rulers took full advantage of this..... by coming towards as the patrons of Bengali Literature where their Hindu predecess-

sors had patronized only aristocratic Sanskrit—from the days of Permanent Settlement the power of Muslim aristocrats in Bengal declined rapidly and the overwhelming plebian character of Muslim Bengal again asserted itself, though in a new historical context.

But Bengal Renaissance estranged Muslim Bengali from Hindu Bengali.....from the Hindu took to Buddhist ways more rapidly than the Muslims.....all this maintained Muslim separatism, but made it necessary for the would be leaders to reflect plebian aspirations too in the Pol. stand.....(Ralph Russell Strand of Muslim Identity in S. Asia—S. Asian Review Vol, 6, No. 1, Oct. 1972, 21-24.

Aspects of Medieval Society and Culture

Satish Misra

WHAT could confer a higher position on the *ilm-i-tarikh* than the fact that this noble discipline has no attractions for the canaille, nor do they derive any advantage from its study in their low occupations ; for the narrative of lofty action does not profit these petty men.

Zia Barni in *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*. Heresy to the heretic and religion to the orthodox.

But the dust of the rose-petal, belongs to the heart of the rose seller.

Abul Fazl : quoted in *Duraru ul Manshur* of Muhammad Askari Hussaini of Bilgram in Blochmann's translation of *A'in-i-Akbari* Vol I.

"Which nation," asked the younger stranger, "for she reigns over two ?"

The stranger paused : Egremont was silent but looked enquiringly.

"Yes," resumed the stranger, after a moment's interval, "Two nations; between whom, there is no intercourse and no sympathy ; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are order by different manners and are not governed by the same law."

“You speak of...” said Egremont hesitantly, “THE RICH AND THE POOR”.

Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield in *Sybil* : 1845.

Periodization in history is, and has to a certain extent, to be arbitrary. Landmarks there are, but no sudden breaks and it is always difficult to decide where an era ends and the other begins. Criteria for such decisions ignore certain facets of reality and are devised primarily for purposes of understanding and study.

The age which historians call the medieval is such a methodological necessity based upon a certain model of Indian history. It emphasizes certain developments which took place in this age and which distinguish it from the age which preceded it and the other which followed. Necessarily, it has diffuse borders ; it can be argued with adequate reason that the medievalism characteristics of this period did not materially alter in the subsequent one—that the mores of the people though partially disrupted by the advent of western technology in production, transport and communication, retained a great deal of their former content and continue to be still with us.

The study of medieval infrastructure of our social and cultural being is thus an essential element of our understanding of the present. A myopic value judgement might categorise the former as obscurantist and backward looking, might see an inherent dichotomy in what is seen as modern and what, medieval ; to a student of history, who has no wish to idealise the past, to gloss over its sombre realities, and who has a certain value preference too, it is nevertheless necessary to view it fairly, to understand it sympathetically and to assess its contribution in the progress which he envisages.

It is in this sense of inquiry that I attempt to sketch what I feel to be some sort of a “medieval synthesis” which developed during these ages, especially during the age of the Great Mughals. As I say this, I am conscious of an inadequacy, almost a contradiction. Is there such a synthesis, conceptually definable as a construct of values and beliefs, attitudes and manners ? Does it have a Pan-Indian validity ? Can it be posited against a more recently framed modernity model ?

Certainly, it is not possible to frame a closely framed model which would have a pan-Indian applicability. For at this point definitions of medievalism become themselves vague. Does medievalism has its core

content, the rise of Muslim power and powers and the emergence and evolution of Muslim society in India, which certainly is a cardinal feature ? Disparity both chronologic and social begins to show itself.

It is not my intention to go into this knotty problem here. I shall assume that this age in Indian history which spans the period from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries has, as one of its dominant features, the evolution of Muslim society in India. It is not my view that this epochal development in our people and their history, was in any way, prejudicial to the existent order, that two civilisations, two peoples were in confrontation during these ages and that they worked out after a great deal of tension, compromises for co-existence. It has never seemed to me that there was some basic antithesis between the Hindu and the Muslim, *qua* Hindu, *qua* Muslim or that this contact was necessarily hostile, placing either on the defensive. Obviously, the inter-action between the two had profound effect on our people ; it is this inter-action with all its attendant processes which, it has seemed to me, shaped the contours of our present society and culture.

The historiography of the Thirties, imbued with the ethos of nationalism was concerned with this theme. One of the doyens of Indian historiography, Professor Tara Chand writes in his eloquent, *Influence of Islam of Indian Culture*, first published in 1936 :

“It is necessary to repeat that most of the elements in the southern schools of devotion and philosophy taken singly, were derived from ancient systems ; but the elements in their totality and in their peculiar emphasis betray an approximation to the Muslim faith and therefore make the argument for Islamic influence possible.” (p. 107)

And again :

“Thus after the first shock of conquest was over, the Hindus and the Muslims prepared to find a *via media* whereby to [live as neighbours. The effort to seek a new life led to the development of a new culture which was neither exclusively Hindu nor purely Muslim. It was indeed a Hindu-Muslim culture. Not only did the Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Muslim elements but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of Hindu mind were altered and the Muslim reciprocated by responding to the changes in every department of life.” (p. 137).

In the first passage, Professor Tara Chand is alluding to the popular and universal Bhakti movement which swept India and which gave birth

not only to highly charged deeply introspective religious movements but also to a social critique which was vehemently opposed to cent, verbiage and meaningless ritual in worship to undeserved hierarchy in society, to flagrant abuses of power in the political system. Regional language grew into literary media on the strength of this movement ; it would not be an exaggeration to say that catharsis not only had a deep and abiding influence on the Indian mind but served as the source of inspiration for the literary effort, which provided the base for Indian languages to develop.

These two, rather random passages picked from Professor Tara Chand's book which in my student days was undergraduate reading, indicate his passionate conviction that Indian culture was a composite culture in which both Hindus and Muslims had participated, that they were one people—and both could look back with pride on their achievement in the medieval past. It also had, an assumption that the "Hindu" and the "Islamic" or "Muslim" were two systems which inter-acted as systems and consequently achieved a synthesis.

For Professor Tara Chand, the focus of inquiry was Indian culture ; for another distinguished, Pakistani scholar, an active and contemporary writer today, the emphasis is not India but Islam. For him, much more clearly than for Professor Tara Chand, Indian culture means Hindu culture. Prefacing his scholarly and perceptive study, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964), Professor Aziz Ahmad writes :

"The development of Islamic Culture in India is as much a regional formulation of universal Islamic culture as a response to tensions arising out of its tenacious persistence for survival, its fear of submergence and the compromises it made from time to time in the overwhelmingly non-Islamic environment of India." (p. vii).

Implicit in both the formulations but with varying emphasis is the involvement with the Hindu-Muslim problem. Historically, this concern could be treated to the nationalist thesis that religious tensions in India were a result of the imperialist policy of *divide et impera* ; as such, the earlier ages were free of this vicious prejudice. Likewise, it had also to be argued consequently, that there was an innate dichotomy in India, that the two elements, the Hindu and the Muslim were irreconcilable and that Pakistan had been inwriten in the history of India since the first Muslim set foot in India. Whether you argued for the scissors or the needle, the two pieces of cloth had implicitly to be granted.

Historical macroevaluations of medieval and for that matter even modern society are based on an implicit assumption that the Hindu and the Muslim are two distinct social systems, that they are monolithic entities, that they have no subsystems internal to them. For the Hindu, it is qualified by the recognition that it is a caste society with an innate hierarchy which sanctions privilege ; the Muslim society however is seen not in its actually existent form but in a hypothetical one, as can be gleaned from literature.

Assumptions like these disregards some of the basic parameters and dynamics of medieval society. For one, the physical setting itself was not conducive to the formation of monolithic, pan-indic entities. Medieval economy was very much of a gamble in rains with the total system dependent heavily on the over-taxed agrarian sector. Travel was difficult and possible only for the rich or for the poor in distress ; channels of communication were limited and mostly confined to official use. Trade expanded rapidly in the 17th century leading to the expansion of money economy to the rural areas. But even in Gujarat, with an active maritime trade, it is doubtful if the monetisation of rural economy had been more than peripheral in large areas which subsisted primarily on low yield food crops.

The persistence of traditional economic and social institutions, which were strengthened and used for their own ends by the Muslim rulers inhibited the poorer agrarian masses from direct contract with the higher echelons, and limited the incidence of state action. Lack of communication and transport infra-structure restricted the pull and the formation of pan-indic markets only to certain light-weight, high priced commodities—and as such commodity production was limited. The zamindar, in Gujarat for instance suffered a sizeable erosion in his authority, barring some core areas, only in the 17th century. The Sultans could exact little more than a *salami* from Saurashtra and the belt of Rajput states which ringed the plains.

Factors such as these limited the disruption of traditional culture and cushioned the impact of intrusive elements. Rather, they served to adapt the novel feature in the pattern of the old. Muslim society thus, as it came into being in India, came to be shaped not only in accordance with the social requisites of the law books but also in tune with the exigencies and mores of the region in which it was situated.

Thus, immigrant communities like the Syeds, Shaikhs, Afghans, Mughals and others developed a way of life in which some of their basic

mores and some of the region, came to be synthesized. This was not a conscious process of adjustment ; it was not adjustment to a Hindu model though features of this model were incorporated. It was adjustment to a way of life, to a status in society, to a pattern of livelihood which they had accepted. A *saiyyid qazi* and an Afghan *jagirdar* in Bengal and Gujarat would have some ritual and behavioural features in common; so also would they have between themselves and in common with other equal status communities within the region.

This process of indigenisation led to the rise of a Muslim upper class, patronised by the rulers, in the Sultanate of Delhi and its successor states. It is this class which was the referent for Sikandar bin Manjhu, the 16th century Mughal historian of the Sultanate of Gujarat—to prove to the compeers of the “Gujarat” nobles in the Mughal nobility, what a great land Gujarat was and how excellent its people were ! And by people, Sikandar meant not the common mass but these scions of former nobility of Gujarat inducted into the Mughal system.

The prime orientation of the upper class nobility was the requirements of their status in life and station ; this imperative was common to the Muslim and to the Hindu, who accepted the Mughal system. It is thus, by an effortless evolution of elite mores that a way of life, a culture came into being. In language, in polite behaviour, in dress, in inter-personal behaviour and etiquette, in paternalistic attitude towards inferiors—in a host of other behavioural aspects, a “Mughal” culture, a metropolitan one evolved and was shared by this class. It had differences ; the *Saiyyid* and the *Rajput* differed on many points ; but they accepted the norms of this court and public culture. It is this culture which, with its liberal patronage of literary, visual and performing arts of architecture, of crafts, with its paternalistic ethos and upper class norms, with its male dominance in property and family organisation, with its intimate family customs and ritual derived both from tradition and the region—and with high concept of personal honour and *noblesse oblige*—it is this culture which became the culture of the upper classes and the foundation of the traditional Indian culture of today.

This culture, it has to be recognised, embraced almost all public and some private areas of behaviour. It was both Hindu and Muslim and yet neither for it was essentially a court culture which a certain necessity and a certain way of life had brought into being. It did not and could not—it was not intended to, to obliterate the differences between the Hindu and the Muslim nor to act as a bridge between them. It did not cover the more intimate aspects of familial and ritual mores. And as the

Mughal empire grew, its nobility expanded, it expanded to cover the regions, the Indo-Gangetic region, Central India, Gujarat and the Deccan.

And as, the Mughal state began to weaken in the late 17th and 18th century, as its nobility acquired bases in the regions and as the se beneficiaries of the declining system converged in regional centres like Ahmedabad, Khambhat, Surat and Palanpur—their upper class culture became noticeably tinged with the regional customs.

This culture was essentially a class culture; an upper class culture could hardly be otherwise. It is an over-simplification to assert that the Muslim system evolved as an egalitarian one; the Turkish system which came into India in the 13th century was a privilege system based on race. The Ashraf-Ajlaf dichotomy, a theoretic framework which emerged in the Doab Heartlands was in itself a construct like the *varna* of placing the various Muslim *qaums*, communities in a hierarchical order.

Indigenisation of upper class Muslim communities was simultaneous with the minimal islamization of convert groups. Patterns of worship and some patterns of ritual behaviour were affected; a conscious break with the past was recognised. But deeper familial mores, social forms, family organisation, family law, did not change. The Rajputs did not take to cousin marriage; daughters were not given a share in the family holdings. In Kerala, the matrilineal system was not affected. Widow remarriage continued to be banned; curiously, this practice came to be accepted in upper class immigrants too.

Muslim society thus, both at the upper level and the poorer level paralleled Hindu society in its social attitudes. Both had a hierarchical system with an ingrained paternalistic ethos; both had polygynous households with women barred from public activity. Among both, there was preference to in-caste marrying. By and large, Muslim wings continued to accept girls from the Hindu though the reverse was not possible. The untouchables both Hindu and Muslim continued to be excluded from places of worship—and even from the core of the doctrinal content.

In brief, the upper class Muslim was closer to a privileged Hindu than to his poorer co-religionist. The same was true of the Hindu as well. And while there was a metropolitan culture for the upper classes, the same was hardly true for the poorer. The more rural, more poor a caste was, the more deep was it rooted in its local ethos and mores.

Medieval society thus, both Hindu and Muslim was a plural society *par excellence*. Only the tip of this society was responsive to a metropoli-

tan orthodoxy; each caste, each cast analogue had its own local orthodoxy in which the doctrinal content of the faith was only one of the several elements. And even, the understanding of the faith, especially among the Muslim where there was a recognisable core, was hardly such as would have satisfied an *alim*—especially among the poorer sections.

The attenuation in the practice of the faith worried reformers especially in the later 17th and 18th centuries and much more in the 19th. One of the early reformers in Gujarat is Pir Mashaikh, a *pir* of rural masses in north Gujarat produced an extensive literature intended to acquaint his followers with the Islamic lore. Some of this has been published by his followers now divided in Shi'a and Sunni groups. His efforts were valiant but short lived; his successors relapsed into their complacent ways abandoning his islamizing efforts and he himself seems to have made hardly a dent in the agrarian, caste-encrusted mores of his people. Syed Ahmad Barelwi could inspire a *jihad* against the Sikhs and possibly the English—but he too came up against a wall in his efforts at weaning the common man from what was conceived as unislamic and unlawful.

Not only Muslim but Hindu society had a high quantum of local and regional beliefs and customs but in Hinduism, this had been recognised and implicitly accepted. The Hinduization of the hill folk of central India which appears to have commenced with the age of Akbar was based on this acceptance—and by weaning away the ruling class from some of the blatant non-Hindu practices like beef eating, and by sanctioning marital alliances between them and other Rajput houses. But the bulk of this population remained largely animistic, tinged only peripherally by faith in certain Brahminic deities and even that in areas exposed to Brahmin influence.

Medieval society has thus to be viewed as a plural society and medieval culture, an expression of that society. Pan-indic or universal forms of the Great Tradition are expressed in regional and local forms, are therefore conditioned by the local environment. In this setting, social units both Hindu and Muslim are largely inward-oriented, grouped around circles the core of which is the family, the extended lineage and then the caste. And each caste, in Islam, each sect, has its own orthodoxy. And if this orthodoxy is based on a self-identification with either Islam or Hinduism, it has to be recognised as such.

This in-group solidarity is expressed in the medieval age in many ways. It is expressed in the village in the tenure system of what Baden

Powell has called the *bhayachara* villages, of which as Professor Nurul Hasan has remarked, there is a great deal of evidence from the *Ain-i-Akbari* onwards (*Thoughts on Agrarian Relations in Mughal India*, p. 22). It is expressed in patterns of urban living, which create caste-based neighbourhoods, even of a caste group hailing from a certain place.

This inward orientation is however based on a recognition of other groups to have a similar system—and is largely free from prejudice, except in certain peculiar circumstances where doctrinal issues were exacerbated or linked to political ones. There is thus co-operation and active interpersonal activity. In the commercial city of Surat where half a dozen trading groups, other than the foreign traders, were avidly engaged in the remunerative task of money making, there is a high degree of competition and co-operation among the traders, *dalals* and others. Likewise, the solidarity and tenacity of the self-governing institutions of the village which placed it beyond the purview of the governmental machinery indicates that human life was not dominated by a single set of loyalties, primary though they may have been.

And, new groups could form; new castes came into existence not only by conversion but on occupational bases. Evidence of this is not always firm but it would seem that *julahas*, weavers formed into local castes; *kalawants* were probably one such caste. In Gujarat, the spread of *mahdawi* doctrines among the *tai* or weavers of central Gujarat led them to form into a separate in-marrying caste.

Mughal society and Mughal culture, the expression of that society came into being in a certain social and economic milieu. The synthesis which it created was not by conscious, deliberate effort but by an unconscious aesthetic predilection, born out of life and love for the land where its people were. The great Khan Khana, was a patron of literature, Persian and Braj—and one of the greatest of Braj poets not by effort but by nature, by his existential awareness of his milieu. The distinction between the Hindu and the Muslim, certainly meaningful in other context, here became blurred; neither the Khan Khana nor Malik Muhammad Jayasi felt less a Muslim for accepting and using a medium which was of the people. Hindus and Muslims joined in creating a whole world of culture—but can it be said that their communal identity was basic to this creation? In painting, in architecture the medieval synthesis reflects a collective image, where it seems pointless to search for such identities. Urdu poetry for instance,

in its latter phases in the 18th century, is essentially urban, essentially post-Mughal and essentially of Delhi and Lucknow.

In none of this do I find a deliberate, conscious effort to bring two peoples felt to be apart, together, to frame a *modus vivendi* for common existence. Even less do I see a Islam on the defensive or a Hinduism on the decline—or for that matter two warring ideologies seeking accommodation. The anxiety for cultural purity, the perceived danger of infection, of syncretism is there; so also is the diagnosis of the Fall, of the failure of the guardians to live up to their mission, which is seen as the cause of the atrophy of the Mughal order.

This diagnosis was however not unique to the 18th century. If Shah Waliullah could see the fall of the Mughal empire as a retribution for the failure of the Mughal nobility to live up to their religious obligations, the Hindu writers of a much earlier age could assign the same reason for the fall of Somnath. In either case, neither the diagnosis nor the therapy was correct—for it was not possible for the physician, given his system, to perceive the malady.

Separatism in Tamil Nadu A Historical Approach

K.K. Pillay

TAMIL NADU has become famous or rather notorious as the region fighting against national integration. It is worthwhile studying the genesis of this movement, its nature and results.

It is important to remember that in the dim past Tamil Nadu, like any other region of the sub continent, felt itself to be an integral part of the country. In the Sangam age which contains the earliest recorded feelings and aspirations of the people, the poets thought of Bharat as one unit. The idea that India comprised the entire region from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari is found reflected in several poems.¹ Muranjiyur Mudinaganar, one of the early Sangam poets, blesses a person thus:² "May you stand firm like the Himalayas and the Podiyil Hill (in the extreme south)". Another Sangam poet blesses the Pandyan Nedunche-liyan thus : "May you become chief among the victors who command the services of all those that live between the Kumari in the South and the Great Mountain in the north and between the sea in the east and in the west."

The fundamental unity of India was co-eval with the geographic unity. That unity seemed to transcend the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sect as V.A. Smith himself

1. Puram : 67: 6 - 7 ; Padirrupattu : 11 : 23 : 5

2. Puram : 2

stated. But it must be realised that in the early days the unity was based on religion and sentiment only. For example, all through the past the sanctity of the Ganges in the north was equated with that of Kaviri in the south.³ In fact the whole of India has claimed, Ganges as its own. In Tamil Nadu any sacred tank or river is Ganga.

Regarding the temples, those of Kasi and Setu have been held to be equally sacred throughout India in all times. Several shrines in the South have been called after Kasi, as for instance, Tenkasi, Kalahasti or Dakshinakasi. In the South Kanchi was a great centre of religion and thought. The Sanskrit saying 'Nagaresu Kanchi' emphasises it.

Sanskritisation of the South commenced even if the Sangam age though it proceeded but gradually. Vedic sacrifices are mentioned in the Sangam age *e.g.* Palyagasalai Peruvaludi, Rajasuyam Vetta Perun arkilli and Cheraman Chenkuttuvan are some of the early kings of Tamilaham who performed Vedic sacrifices. Still later, the influences of the Epics and the Puranas were integrating forces.

Religious devotees of Tamil Nadu belonging to the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. have sung hymns on Kedaram and Kailas. The Alvars also have sung hymns on a number of shrines in the north, like those of Muttra, Ayodhya, Dvarak and Badarikama. Leaders of the south reached the north and influenced the doctrines there. Sankara and Ramanuja went north as ambassadors of culture in the spheres of religion and philosophy. Similarly the influence of the saints of North India was reflected in the south. Chaitanya, Ramdas and Kabir were very popular in Tamilaham. Chitanya and Thulsidas actually toured the Tamil Land. In the 17th century a great Tamil saint, Kumaraguruparasvami went to the north and visited several places there including Kasi and founded a Siva temple there. Many others from Tamil Nadu went on pilgrimage to Kasi. But all these interactions were exclusively religious.

Coming to modern times, it is a piece of bare truth, though unpalatable to us now, that the harbingers of political integration in India were the British. Indeed, but for the unity effected though for selfish reasons and but for the development of means of communication we could not have come together here, as we have done.

In the struggle for independence the Tamils played their part, peshaps not comparable with certain other regions of India. Needless to say that the Tamils were also actuated by the ideal of a free and united

3. Pattinappalai: 190; Silap : 7 : 2 ; 25 : 120

India. Bharati, the great hero in the struggle for independence, was a great champion of national integration. In his songs, he projects the concept of a free and united India. Several others followed his footsteps.

Meanwhile in the first quarter of the 20th century the domination of the Brahmins in various walks of life fomented a communal antipathy. The Justice Party arose. But it must be remembered that though communal animosity was the basic factor, the immediate spark came from personal anguish and disappointment. Dr. T.M. Nair was defeated in an election to the Corporation and later in his election to the Legislatures from a constituency strongly populated by the Brahmins. And Dr. Nair became one of the founders of the Justice Party along with Dr. Natesa Mudaliar and Theagaraya Chetty. The Justice Party did not identify itself with the Indian National Congress or with the struggle for Indian independence. Indeed the Congress was taken to be a brahmin party. How the personal and communal factors were responsible for anti-national policies should be remembered.

Caste, with its multitudinous sub-divisions, is almost an insurmountable barrier to national integration. Perhaps is no other sphere is the diversity between theory and practice so conspicuous as in this field. In public speeches and writings casteism was and is condemned roundly ; but in actual practice, particularly in preferences for employment and in the canvassing for candidates in elections, the allegiance to caste and to religion is a widely operative factor. Even among the educated peoples these preferences are potently operative to this day. Perhaps a wider expansion of education can be expected to induce people to take a broader view and support those who stand for the benefit of the entire country than of particular castes and communities or regions. Selfishness, communalism, parochialism must all give place to honest nationalism. It cannot be too strongly urged that many who profess to be devotees of notiona-
lism are champions of narrower causes.

The Justice Party which was non-national in outlook, was dominated by the well-to-do people and Zamindars. Soon lethargy set in and it was more concerned with acquiring benefits for the caste Hindus only. About 1926 there emerged the radical Self Respect Movement which was revolutionary and rationalistic. E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker who had once been a Congress leader and had participated in the anti-untouchability movement became the champion of the Dravidian

separation. In 1944 the Justice Party's name was changed to Dravida Kalagam.

The Indian National Congress was identified with the Brahmins and with the northerners. Naicker whipped up communalism and provincialism and on top of these rationalism and atheism. At the outset he wanted all the Dravidians i.e. those who were not Brahmins must, unite and operate against the Congress. While much enthusiasm for this so-called Dravidanadu was not forthcoming in other regions, later he concentrated in Tamil Nadu. Though a Kannadiga by birth he was a native of Tamil land and he became the champion of Tamil language, literature and culture. The Tamil Renaissance was born and it gave an impetus to the separatist movement. The anti-Hindi and anti-North attitude became identified with the development of purism and bigotry in the Tamil language. A furious attempt was made to eschew Sanskrit words from Tamil. The writings and speeches of the new movement were characterised by bitter animosity against every thing non-Tamilian. The new wave gathered a big following and E.V.R. became the Periyar, the great leader. His political pupil, Annadurai, adopted the master's lead, but after a time becoming vexed with the extreme steps adopted by Periyar, fell out in 1949 and founded the D.M.K. A powerful speaker and writer in Tamil and English, Annadurai became popular and when the D.M.K. was returned in the elections he became the Chief Minister of Madras. He had an untimely death and Karunanidhi became the Chief Minister on 2.3.1967. It is well known that Karunanidhi tried to hold out the threat of separatism in order to procure certain privileges from the Congress Government at the top. He brandished this political weapon against Indian unity. Indeed he was even acclaimed as the Mujibur Rahman of Tamilnad. What has happened during the past three or four years is too well known to be told here. Several charges were levelled against the D.M.K. ministry and it was supplanted by the President's rule on 1st February 1976.

A few years period to that, the Treasurer of the D.M.K. fell out with his chief and organised the Anna D.M.K. Very recently he and his followers have joined the Congress while agreeing to co-operate with the Janata. It is difficult to foresee the future of the separatist movement. Opportunism seems to be a dominant feature of both the D.M.K. and the A.D.M.K.

The present position of the D.M.K. and Anna D.M.K. in respect of separatism is not very clear, though both the parties have disclaimed the

allegiance to separatism. In fact the attitude of the D.M.K. and Anna D.M.K. is one of hostility to each other and they want to ignore or go back on separation. But it should be clearly understood that they were responsible for creating an attitude of hostility to the Centre and generating a spirit of Tamil chauvinism.

The principal issue on which the hostility to the north was formed was that of language. The south and particularly Tamil Nad had been opposed to the foisting of Hindi over the unwilling South. The triumph of the Congress in 1937 gave a fillip to the cause of integration and also to the popularisation of Hindi.

But there was immediate reaction against Hindi. Some youngsters like Thalamuthu and Natarajan sacrificed their lives in the movement. M.P. Sivagnanam raised his voice against both Hindi and English alike and insisted on the implementation of Tamil as the only State language. There was a craze for Tamil. Conferences, Speeches and researches were all held through Tamil. An adulation of the glories of ancient Tamil literature and culture became the order of the day.

Meanwhile the Central Government was insistent on the introduction and popularisation of Hindi. In January-July 1965 that resulted again in a vigorous anti-Hindi campaign in Tamil Nad. The State Government was not able to suppress the agitation. The help of the Central Government's army was sought. There was a ferocious struggle. Several men committed suicide. This fervour resulted in the triumph of the D.M.K. in the elections in 1967. This D.M.K. Government with its thumping majority introduced a number of measures in supporting Tamil. There was another wave of renaissance not only in respect of language but also of customs and manners including marriage ceremonies. However, on account of charges of corruption the Ministry was overthrown and the President's rule was established on 1st February 1976.

Now the question remains as to what the future attitude or the permanent position of the D.M.K. and the A.I.D.M.K would be in respect of Hindi. They must both take a pledge in favour of the three languages formula. At the same time the ever increasing suspicion in the south that the Hindi speaking North is bent on forcing Hindi down on the South, much vanish.

In this context the importance of English cannot be viewed from a sentimental standpoint. No one can deny that English has become an international language and unless we want to retard our progress we must

adopt the three language formula. If you drop English we drift back to the days of Shah Alam II, or perhaps to the epoch of Muhammad of Ghor. Dr. Nurul Hassan's view that adequate resources are not available for providing teachers in English seems to be unacceptable. Nothing is more important than education and unless we want to revert to medievalism, money must be found for teaching English.

Perhaps this is the time when both North and South must take a sincere pledge in support of the three language formula. It is undeniable that there has been fanaticism in both sides and if the integrated India is to make headway in all directions a bold policy must be adopted. Linguistic bigotry and chauvinism must vanish.

The advantages of national integration must be recognised. Our political position, stability of the government, our status in the eyes of other nations and our economic development and eradication of poverty and improvement of employment opportunities, to which the Janata party is pledged, are all factors which must weight with sincere administrators who must take a statesmanlike view of the question.

Similarly the South must forget that bigoted linguism is ruinous to the Southerners themselves and to their brethren in the north. They stand to benefit by the development of a strong and stable Central Government. Their status rises in the eyes of foreigners. Their economic position and particularly irrigation policy can be handled effectively only through a Central Government. The water disputes between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, for example, cannot be settled on a State level. Nor can the scheme of bringing the water of Krishna or even of Ganga to the South become feasible without a farsighted and well-integrated Central Government. There must be a policy of give and take. Sentimentalism must give place to realism.

I welcome most heartily the advice that there is need for developing character and discipline among students. These are wise words and every effort must be made to ennoble these fundamental virtues. I go a step further and say that basically the character and discipline of teachers must be improved. It is a piece of bitter truth that teachers in my part of the country, as elsewhere, are more often politicians first and teachers next, if at all. Nor are the character and discipline of the politicians themselves, either in the South or in the North, uniformly of a high order. Some plain speaking is imperative if national integration and national progress are to be attained.

Tribes of India—Shift from Majority Complex to Minority Complex Through Primitive Complex

B.K. Roy Burman

1. During 1971 census 38 million persons were anumerated as belonging to the category of scheduled tribes. They constitute about 7 per cent of the total population of the country. In terms of formal statistics they are a small minority. But paradoxically until recently most of them perceived themselves as the majority. It is modernisation which has generated a minority complex among them. The earlier majority complex was based on facts of geography, technology and ways of life.

While at the all India level the scdeduled tribes constitute a small minority there are six cities and Union Territories where they are in the majority. When considered at the *taluka* level it is found that there are about 300 *taluks* where they are in the majority. About half of the tribal population in the country live in these *taluks*. There are a large number of villages beyond the boundaries of these *taluks* but contiguous to them where also the tribals are in the majority.

It is estimated that about 10 per cent of the total tribal population of the country live in these villages. Thus majority of the tribal population of the country live in the areas where they are in the majority. With small breaks here and there these *taluks* constitute almost a continuous belt from Thana district in Maharashtra to Tengnoupal district in Manipur.

In fact cognates of the tribes in North East India are found outside India in the adjoining countries of South East Asia. If they are taken

into consideration there is a continuous tribal belt from Arabian sea to the pacific ocean.

Until recently tribals were majority in these area not merely in the demographic sense ; it was also a social reality, Their self-perception was that of the majority. With their low level of technology and educational attainment, their aspirations were confined to the control of the resources and management of the social organisation at the local level. They were not too much bothered with what was happening in the rest of the country. Even many of them did not feel much disturbed about their low level of technology or about their illiteracy. They were a proud people and they considered these as different ways of life. If sometimes they felt that their neighbours were having better of them, they would try to cope with the situation, along with other measures, by stealing of the goods of their deighbours. They would append the names of the goods, of the neighbours to the names of their own goods. Psychologically it was not a case of cultural borrowing ; it was a strategy of confrontation.

With the penetration of the market forces during the colonial dispensation, the control of the tribal communities over their resources eroded rapidly and their traditional social organisation was badly damaged. Some of them were drawn into the arena of education and the network of modern communication. The majority complex was shattered and there was an agonising and awareness of the inadequacy of their technology and old world view. They started to perceive themselves as primitive.

Thus the primitive was born in the minds of men in a specific historical context. But there are other aspects of the tribal situation which are more important.

If one examines the tribal predominant areas carefully, one finds that they are located in the meeting points of dominant politico-cultural areas like Assam and Bengal ; Bengal and Bihar, Bihar and Orissa, Gujarat and Rajasthan and so on. This pattern of distribution cannot be explained by the nature of the terrain only. In that case the whole of Jammu and Kashmir, or Nainital district in Uttar Pradesh would have been inhabited by the tribals only. There are evidences to suggest that the tribal communities by their strategic locations have sometimes played the bridge role and sometimes the buffer roles in between communities with organised state structures. It is thus obvious that their isolation is a myth ; it is also a myth that they were parts and parcels of the politically dominant cultures with whom they were in contact. The

tribal social organisation and cultures frequently responded to influences received from multiple resources and in their turn they also influenced the the cultural processes of the multiple contact groups.

With the spread of industrialisation and network of modern communication the traditional pattern of relationships of the tribals with the contact cultures were disrupted and there was a time-lag before new patterns of relationship came up. It was during this time lag that the tribal communities in the continent were perceived as isolates.

The tribal communities turned into isolates through a different process also. The bulk of them live on upland terrains which are or until recently were covered with forests. Traditionally they have corporate rights of ownership, management and use of the forest resources. During the colonial rule, vast tracts of forests were declared as reserved forests for the purpose of commercial exploitation. But nothing was done to provide alternative sources of livelihood to the tribals. Thus state or state sponsored capitalism was imposed on a primitive technological base. Naturally there was resistance from the tribals against encroachments on their rights. This resistance was branded by the colonialists as a resistance of barbarism against civilisation. Unfortunately very few in the rest of the country could see identity of their interests with the struggle of the forest dwellers. Except for one or two exceptions no attempt was made on the part of the national leadership to integrate the struggle of the tribals for the protection of their rights into the struggle for national freedom. On the other hand, some of the leaders of the tribal societies had tried to project their movements as part of the national movement. They did not get much enthusiastic response. They had to fight their lonely battle.

The loneliness has been further intensified in the post-independence period. By and large the legacy of the colonial forest policy has continued in post-independence India. It is commercial exploitation of forests in the interests of big business and industry in the country and outside, which is responsible for the denudation of forests and environmental degradation to a considerable extent. Rather than restricting the same, attempts have been made in the name of ecological managements to restrict the rights of the tribal communities in using the forest products for meeting their essential needs of life. It seems that recently the incogruity of this elitists approach is being recognised by some of the more perceptive minds in the country. But clear cut policy is still to emerge.

The tribals also find that they are fighting a losing battle not only in respect of their forest, but also in respect of their agricultural land.

The conditions for such alienation are created by (a) Non recognition of the corporate rights where they existed during the preparation of the record of rights, (b) Non-recognition of such rights as the basis of modernisation of land use (c) Failure on the part of the financial institutions like banks and cooperatives to evolve operational and procedural norms which are suitable for marginal and small farmers or for those whose individual rights are embedded in corporate rights (d) On the eve of emergence of new economy extinguishing the traditional rights by payment of compensation at rates which hold good only for the old economy.

In recent years a number of legislations have been enacted by the different states, restricting the alienation of tribal lands. But so long as the massive factors of alienation continue, these legislation will serve little purpose.

In their lonely battle for survival the tribals find that they are a minority. They turn to old gods for help. They dream new scripts ; they glimpse new meanings in their old practices. But nothing helps them. They shed their primitive complex and project themselves as a minority among the minorities . A new realisation dawns to them. They question the very system of organisation of state power in modern industrial society. The philosophical propositions like system of self-management, decentralisation of power and minimal state strike a sympathetic chord in their mind. From the position of minority, some of them think of global system, of the redemption of mankind perhaps there are more universal men in the offing in the tribal societies than elsewhere.

VOLUME II

The Debate

Radhey Mohan : When we use the term 'Composite' there is an assumption of differentiation amongst the components which go into the making of a pattern which we say nation-building. There is a time dimension in it, that this unit of human population which belongs apparently to many components is yet to emerge into a pattern of modern nation.

Perhaps, no other modern nation in the world has to deal with such a range of ethnic and other kinds of diversities at local levels as India. The nature of pre-modern organisations, and diversities in Indian civilisation have been a subject of enquiry and debate amongst scholars belonging to many disciplines. However, we are not looking merely into the structure of the past but our main focus is on the process by which our complex heritage which, of course is given, has to be wielded together to build up the new reality of nationhood.

Unfortunately, all the definitions of nationhood which we have derived are from western experience which embody certain notions of citizenship and participation in a civic order. The people of India, it is believed, in pre-modern times, were not accustomed to living in a set up where norms of common citizenship were followed. On this, there may be divergent views and even controversies, but we start with the assumption that to live as common citizens in a modern nation, certain basic requirements have to be accomplished and solutions to problems, given the will, can be found by discussion, persuasion and consensus.

With these words I invite you to a discussion of some vital problems, which despite 36 years of independence, continue to plague our society. I request Professor Niharranjan Ray to initiate the discussion.

Niharranjan Ray : It would be pertinent to define what we mean by the term 'composite'. Do we go by the dictionary meaning of the term composite, which means made up of various parts, or do we mean something else beyond the dictionary meaning injecting into it a different connotation. The term 'national' is also crucial. Are we using it in the sense of Indian people alone, or in the sense in which the terms nation, national, nationality, nationalism are commonly used. These are political concepts which have grown out of conflicts of a fast industrialising Europe within the orbit of capitalist world. Do we stick to the 19th century concept of nation and think of national integration in that context? We should be clear about the connotations of these terms. Integration, again, does not mean anything more than combination of parts into one common whole. It does not connote merger of parts. It connotes autonomous existence of the parts which are brought together to form one common whole. The continuing debate gives birth to a feeling that from time to time we have been changing the connotations. We are injecting fresh meanings into it expecting much more than what is connoted.

There is a talk of cultural integration in some quarters. I do not know what does it mean. Everyone knows the continental nature of our country, the immensity of its size. If we compare it with Europe, in Europe we have several nation-states and here is a country which is, so far as the size is concerned, is equal to the whole of Europe minus Russia and we do not have nation-states. We have only one single nation-state which is called India with all the subcontinental varieties present in it. It is not now that we have so many regional states. From very early times India has been witnessing a play of forces which are centripetal and centrifugal. The conflict between the centre and the states is as old as at least Ashoka the Great. We have evidence of it. These regional states are a legacy from the past and with a sense of pulling apart. There has always been a tug of war between the Centre and the States. Contemporaneously, we are seeing some of the aspects of this problem in a more pronounced manner. For instance, the ethnic question or the linguistic situation, is a continuation of the age-old problem.

In such a vast country, having a continuous history of at least, 4000 years, each decade, each century has left some impact which became a part of our cultural heritage. The forces of history, in course of time, swept off the dead-wood. One cannot consciously describe what has been left

but the accumulated impressions remain at certain levels which are powerfully felt at times of stress and strain.

The question of cultural integration is a very delicate question. Throughout the 19th Century our national movement did not take into account many of the problems that were inherent in the building up of a nation. But by the turn of the century, at least by about 1910 onwards, we became more and more conscious of these problems and when Gandhiji came into the picture, he brought them up to the surface. If we think in terms of integration of the various cultures, there are problems. Sometimes, I feel that Indian nationalism is an unfulfilled nationalism, despite our independence. We did become independent without doubt, but the nationalism we had aimed at and fought for, by and large, remained unachieved. We have got a nation state. But if we think in terms of culture, entirely different from the composite culture, it has been an unfulfilled nationality.

We have not been able to solve yet what one calls the problems of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. We still call them scheduled tribes, when the term tribe in no connotation existed in Indian history. But we go on using it. I have been crying hoarse for the last one decade that the concept of the term 'tribe' does not hold good in the Indian context, but our sociologists and anthropologists love to think in terms of tribes, forgetting that at a given time in history, we all were members of tribes of one sort or the other. Through the process of history, the tribes grew into bigger and bigger communities and came into the mainstream of life which we call Indian civilisation. Unfortunately, there are still people who have not been able to come into the mainstream of life for various historical reasons.

We have not been able to solve what one calls the most intractable of problems, the Muslim situation. These are not problems that were created by the national resurgence. They were not created in the 19th or 20th Century. They were given to us from the past.

There are other problems also. For instance, the dichotomy of urban and rural civilization. Throughout our periods of national movement, our cry, our slogan was "Back to the villages". Yet, those who gave these slogans, were brought up in an urban culture and civilisation and they never chose to go back to the villages. All the time, not only our metropolitan cities, but also smaller towns and cities, came to be

crowded with people from villages. The exodus from villages has been on the increase. We live on two different planes and there is a dichotomy in each one of us, between urban way of life and rural way of life. We opted for an industrial civilization, building up a large scale industry, while we still say, back to the villages, we do not realise that once electricity, tractor and mower go to the village, it does not remain the village of the yore. It becomes a township of some sort.

When we think in terms of integration, cultural integration, what actually we think of? Do we encompass all our cultural levels, or all aspects of our culture, our behaviour pattern, our socio-religious life, everything that goes by the term culture. I have no illusion, culture is an all embracing term. Culture means one's way of life. Politics is a part of culture, economics is a part of culture. Everything is. This total life pattern of mine, which I call my culture, my style of life, am I to merge this style of life with another community, may be even of a larger community? Can it be done merely by wishing or, if we give a call for emotional integration of the various cultural facets of our life, will it be materialised. If it means merger, then I should think, in the name of the mainstream, and we want everybody to join the mainstream. This is all very laudable. I am prepared to join the mainstream but if by joining the mainstream means giving up the style of my life, then I do not know, I will really do so. Therefore, so far as I am concerned, I stick to the dictionary meaning of the term integration. I recognise the autonomy of various parts. Yet, I consider that the various parts can be brought to stay together, maintaining their respective ways of life, styles of life, their respective rights, socio-religious ideas and practices, trying all the time to live together.

We have often tried to underline the assumption that Indian culture, through the ages, cultivated tolerance. I hate the term tolerance. Tolerance has a superior attitude. Whom am I going to tolerate? Whom am I to tolerate? It is not a question of toleration. If we can draw any lesson from history, it is that historical forces, the compelling forces of a given time, of a given society which oblige people to live together. The living together can be done only on the basis of an understanding that each one has the right to stay in his own way of life and yet socio-economic forces, socio-political forces, political-economic forces, oblige them to stay together.

It is not a question of emotion at all. I don't bring in the subjective element at all. The socio-religious laws and obligations, the economic laws

and obligations, the political ideas and institutions can be organised in such a manner as would oblige people with different ways of life, different styles of life, to stay together. This has happened in history. Therefore, while bringing in any subjective element, any emotional element into it, let us analyse the entire situation without speaking of cultural integration in the context of the Indian situation through which we are passing.

Let us have enough of political integration, enough of economic integration. The rest will take care of itself. If we understand what economic integration means, what political integration means, if we really understand what administrative integration means, i.e., administrative policies, administrative institutions, practices and so on and so forth which can be organised in a manner as would oblige different communities, different segments of society at different levels of our life, each having their respective values, cultural ideas, to live together, not in a superior sense of one tolerating the other, but of being obliged to accommodate each other, we have approximated the idea.

It is a process of accommodation. If we have to live within a given nation-state, we have to live by certain duties and obligations. These duties and obligations can be organised in a manner so as to oblige people to make conscious attempts all the time to accommodate one another. This is all that we can do meaningfully. If we want to do more, we are more likely to run into pitfalls. Therefore, we must learn to live together without being impatient. It is better not to bring in an emotional attitude and speak in terms of a cultural integration. I would repeat let us take a little more care of our economics and politics, of our administration, and if on these three fronts, the political, economic and the administrative, we can organise our house in a manner which will oblige people to accommodate each other and one another, we shall be doing much more than any generation can do. It is good to be realistic.

Satish Chandra : I do not think that I should try to define culture. So many eminent scientists have tried to do so. All that I would say is that to try to define abstract culture from a given social structure, from a given economic situation does not appear to me to be realistic. Certainly, culture means a set of values, culture means an outlook which includes an outlook on spiritual matters. Culture means an attitude of life. But if one imagines that all these can be developed into some kind of an abstraction, without any reference to the specific structure either social, economic or political,

then I am afraid it will be something unhistorical. One of the great dangers of adopting an unhistorical attitude is that we start imagining values which are changeable or changing as eternal. In my opinion, this is the specific problem.

Culture has a strong element of continuity. At the same time, it is necessary to continually adjust the values to a specific situation. I would like to say that as far as our tradition is concerned, we have never been lacking in this ability.

I would recall the words of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in his book *Discovery of India*, where he contrasted the situation of India and China to other countries such as Greece and Egypt, which have had ancient civilizations but where the continuity of the ancient civilization was disrupted. The lesson which is to be drawn is that no culture can remain unchangeable. If it remains unchanging, it will die. Therefore, the specific problem which faces a student of history in our country is, to try and see what are the elements of continuity and what are the elements of change; how the elements of change have been introduced at various times, where are the problems and what are the processes?

As far as the Indian tradition is concerned, I would refer to the concept of *Uttradhikar*, which I consider a remarkable feature of the Indian cultural tradition, the belief that every age has got its own values and that these values are in some ways inter-related with each other. We just cannot change one part of the tradition without affecting other parts of the cultural tradition. I think this needs very careful study, particularly by the manner in which cultural values and attitudes are reflected in our various literary works. Literary academics have so far not paid adequate attention to it. Perhaps, the reason being that we are looking more for the unchanging values, rather than trying to understand the processes of change, which are conditioned historically, economically, socially, etc.

I do not want to say anything further regarding the meaning of the word "Composite". Prof. Niharanjan Ray has explained it in his usual brilliant manner. Whenever we talk of cultural integration, one has a fear that perhaps what the observer is thinking of, is not so much of cultural assimilation as cultural annihilation. This also needs very careful attention.

There was a fond belief at one time that the Aryan and the non-Aryan cultures have been integrated, and assimilated in such a remarkable manner that elements of the Aryan and the non-Aryan elements of culture are indistinguishable. But, this problem has arisen again from South India. It is a problem which we just cannot brush under the carpet. Similarly, when we talk of the entire medieval period of Indian history, the period which is mistakenly called the Muslim period, one of the complaints which is made all along is, that unlike non-Aryans, unlike the Scythians and the Huns, who were willing to be assimilated into Indian culture, and by assimilation here is meant that they were willing to lose their identities completely, the Turks and the Moghuls remained fiercely determined to retain their cultural identity. In other words, when we talk of assimilation, we do not really think in terms of cultural autonomy. We think in terms of the extinction of cultural identity. This appears to me somewhat strange, because the basic feature of Indian culture, is the concept of unity in diversity. Of course, if we use it in a very abstract manner, it can be stretched to cover the entire human race. After all, the entire human race is an example of unity in diversity. But if we apply it to the specific Indian situation, perhaps what is at the base of this concept is that in India, unlike many other civilizations, we are traditionally prepared to accept a much greater degree of diversity compared to situations in other places. On the one hand, we put forward the concept of unity in diversity as one of the key factors of Indian culture, at the same time when we come to a specific situation and to a specific period, we immediately turn round and say "this section, this group, refuses to lose its identity and therefore there is no cultural development." Thus the entire concept of diversity is lost. How precisely in a particular situation, the concept of unity in diversity, is to be applied is an aspect which needs concrete study. I feel that this is one of the aspects which should be discussed in greater detail.

It appears to me that in our search for cultural integration and national unity, another problem which we face is, of trying continually to adopt models from outside which are not relevant for our purposes. I am not specifically referring to the concept of the nation. I refer, particularly to the concept of the State, its being either secular or not secular. We have taken this concept of a secular State from the West and according to our minds there can be only two categories either the State is secular, if it is not so, it must be communal. We go further and imagine that the only yard stick by which we can determine the character of the State is

by the religion of the persons in authority and also some of their public acts. In other words, we do not adopt the scientific method of seeing what was the distribution of power in a particular State. What I am trying to suggest is that this entire syndrome of considering the medieval period as a period where the State was Islamic, leads to a continuation of values and attitudes which create problems in cultural integration in the modern period.

We did not use this foreign model in the ancient period, the concept of a just State was where the ruler did not distinguish between the votaries of different religions and allowed them freedom to practice their own religions. I would also refer to the *Chatur varana* tradition, where the idea was of people in different stations in life not interfering in the duties or beliefs in another station. The entire concept of one's *samskar* was, that everybody was supposed to discharge his duties. If you interfere with the duties of another, you create social instability, and if you create social instability, then political interference becomes necessary.

This concept also applies to the nature of the State. A just ruler is one who allows different sections of population to pursue their own life, whether religious, cultural or any other. That is why the entire concept of *Rajdharma* is the key factor as a part and parcel of kingly duties, and this is also, interestingly enough the concept of *Jahandari* as distinct from the concept of *Deendari* which meant trying to impose one's religious views on the subjects, which was neither desirable nor feasible. All that I am trying to say is that this aspect of tradition, unfortunately, has not received as much emphasis from our scholars as is necessary.

I would not like to dialate on problems of history. Nevertheless, I would suggest that in a country such as ours, a proper historical consciousness is vital for promoting better cultural understanding. Our refusal to properly appreciate the nature of the State in earlier times, or the manner in which culture has been understood, has created problems in our quest for better cultural understanding between different sections of our people.

I would also like to dwell very briefly on the problem of regionalism in Indian history. Most of the studies of history tend to concentrate attention on the processes around Delhi, Agra—the entire northern and north-western part. Consequently and wrongly, specific problems in terms of decisions pertaining to this region are artificially ascribed to the entire

subcontinent. For instance, during the period of community politics the entire agitation which really related to the stresses and strains of this region was wrongly given the name of the two-nation theory. Unfortunately, whenever we talk of cultural integration, this two-nation theory keeps cropping up like king Charles's head. On the one hand, we all refute it. In fact we argue that with the break-up of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the invalidity of this theory, if it was ever valid, is now completely exposed. This is our public stance. But privately we continue to consider that ultimately all Muslim States will bend together against India; that none of the Muslim States can be trusted; that the partition of India was a continuation of the conflict which started with the arrival of the Muslims in India and, therefore, the partition of India was inevitable.

I am saying this because the other day my son who was appearing for his examination showed me a question paper, where a question was put. "In your opinion was the partition of India in 1947 inevitable? And he asked : "What will your answer be"? And frankly I scratched my head, and said : "Well, we will have to have a long discussion about it". Then he asked me : "Can you refer me to any books where this question has been discussed at an academic level"? I do not know of any book because this is another of those questions which we have brushed under the carpet.

I am saying this because we have not been able to create a proper national consciousness. We put forward various regional heroes as national heroes. I do not know, to what extent this really promotes the cause of national integrsation. For, the tendency seems to be that anybody who fought against the Central Government of those days, was fighting for freedom and anybody who took a stand against that movement was in a way reactionary. No serious effort has been made to this conflict in its proper historical perspective and centext. I have no objection to those who fought for regional independence being treated as heroes in the sense that they fought for values which they cherished. But this is no reason to condemn those who fought against it as villains.

Finally, when we talk of mass culture, we cannot really think of it without answering two questions. What type of cultural integration do we have in mind ? Is it a vertical integration or is it a horizontal integration? Is it easy for people who have received a high degree of education, and occupy certain stations in life, to come to terms with each other, to

understand each other. In fact, we have an international "jet-set". As far as the international jet-set is concerned, there is complete cultural integration. We are also developing a national jet-set within our country, and this jet-set, this elite group, if one likes to call it, this national elite group, is also, and can be integrated in a remarkable manner, but is that the type of cultural integration we are seeking?

The real question is : How do we integrate with the masses in our own region? And if we integrate, what type of integration do we have in mind? Should it be the cultural values and the attitudes of the elite, the values of the folk or if there has to be an integration what is the manner, what is the agency of this integration? Perhaps, here the role of education becomes crucial. The question is : Can we develop a true national, cultural integration, without a national system of education?

I am not talking here of the structure—10+2+3. We can have the same structure but we may not have a national system of education. Today, the problem is that 85 per cent of our students study in colleges. The entire ethos in our colleges is narrowly casteist. It is narrowly regional at best. Can we arrive at a national system of education without drastically changing the situation, without drastically changing the functioning of the colleges?

Obviously, we cannot have a mass culture without mass literacy. I would not denigrate the achievements which our country has been able to make during the past several years. At the same time today, we have, perhaps, half the number of illiterates in the world, and the proportion of illiterates in India is growing. Now, can we have a mass culture without making a basic change in this situation; and in that what is the role of our educated people? In what manner can we use the values of non-formal education, the methods of non-formal education? In what way, can we use our entire educational human resources in the endeavour? These are some of the questions which arise when we discuss the problem of composite culture and national integration.

Rasheeduddin Khan : To perceive India as a country is a misnomer, strictly in terms of geography, ethnic identity, linguistic homogeneity, even in terms of belief pattern, as a matter of fact on every term, except that of territorial sovereignty. That India is a country in terms of territorial

sovereignty is very well known. We are single territorial sovereignty, where the laws of the land made by the Legislatures which have been composed by electoral processes, run. Beyond political identity, there is no other identity, single and universal. This is nothing to be afraid of or feel anxious about. As a matter of fact, the proposition which I would advance is this : Territorial political identity need not rest on linguistic identity, cultural identity, religious identity, ethnic identity and so on. Plurality is the hall mark of our cultural civilization, and we ought to be proud of it.

We are plural in the multiple sense of the world. We are the most authentic plural society the world has ever known. This is our strength. Nothing is more repugnant to the culture of India than the attempt to perceive us as a small entity. We are very large.

Secondly, composite culture, is not, at least to the perception of some of us, the sum total of the cultural streams of India, I am not talking of aggregations of culture. Composite culture is a qualitative phenomenon of aggregation of cultures. Composite culture refers to the fusion of cultural values, developing at some point of history, may be in the medieval times, where new fusion of values has taken place, drawing from multiple origins—ethnic, cultural religious origins. That stream still is quite weak, even if it is an important stream. Sometimes, the stream is like a river which flows between two shores which never meet.

Composite culture had a great setback, if I can stipulate, speaking as an academic, with the partition of the country. The two big victims of the partition of the country have been composite culture and Urdu in the first bracket and Muslim identity in the second one.

The partition of the country had been an irrational attempt to abridge and fragment the development of what was known as the composite culture. We wish well to Pakistan, we wish well to Bangladesh. Composite culture is not the fusion of elements of cultures from Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Bengal, Orissa, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and of Urdu culture into one. It has been a stream, sometimes a dormant one without being numerically large, and at other times numerically also substantial. This fact cannot and should not be ignored.

Kamladevi Chattopadhyay : I deeply appreciate Professor Khan and Kripalanij's views and agree with what they have said.

K.K. Hebbar : Kriplaniji, is crisp and to the point in conveying mainly religious and to a certain extent social aspects of our life. I fully agree with his statement that a composite culture is inevitable in a living and growing society. It is also true of the fine arts, for it is the artists or craftsmen who enrich human life by infusing grace and beauty into it.

Fine arts in our country got enriched by foreign influences in various times, Persian, Moghul, Chinese and European, etc. It is also true that under the British rule we were exposed to divergent influence of western academic art, quite alien to our culture to which we responded in different ways.

With the passage of time these various influences were sorted out and today we are in a position to stand on our own groups. With regard to folk and tribal art, I must say, it is created primarily for the enrichment of their own life true to their beliefs and customs. But today the significance of their contribution is being acknowledged even by the sophisticated urban population.

As Kriplaniji has stated, if we accept divergence with sympathy and understanding, no doubt we enrich ourselves.

Being an Indian artist myself I would like to project myself through my art as a universal man. I think it is possible to attain universalism without losing indigenous character.

P.R. Dubhasi : I feel Administration ought to be a significant factor in contributing to the process of national integration. Administration has to be committed to the goal of national progress through economic development, especially of the vulnerable sections of the economy and evolution of a cohesive society on the basis of common citizenship.

The programmes of the economic development are not only intended for increasing gross national product, i.e., increasing production in all sectors, primary, secondary and tertiary; it is also directed towards extending opportunities to poorer sections to participate in the mainstream of the economic activity. Thus in the field of agriculture and rural development the programmes like land reforms, liquidation of rural indebtedness, bringing small and marginal farmers, and artisans in the fold of the co-operatives, earmarking of agricultural credit for these sections, programmes like small farmer development agency and marginal farmers and agricul-

tural labour agency and integrated rural development programme, legislation for the enforcement of minimum agricultural wages and the national rural employment programme, especially for the landless and those having no assets have to be undertaken.

The programmes for development of auxiliary occupations in the rural areas like dairy, poultry, fishery as well as khadi and village industries are aimed at the betterment of the economic conditions of people in the rural society below the poverty line. It is expected that through these programmes all the sections of the rural society will find a place of their own in the national system. In the urban areas, there are similar programmes like that of slum improvement, construction of the houses for the poorer sections, banking assistance to the small man, whether he is a vegetable vendor or a rikshaw puller. These are the measures which are designed to help the disadvantaged sections in the urban society.

For the benefit of these programmes to reach the poorer sections, it is necessary that the administrators in charge of these programmes have themselves the necessary sense of commitment. They should also be able to communicate these programmes to the people for whom they are meant so that they can participate in these programmes.

Administration also is in the charge of the implementation of certain social legislation like untouchability Act which looks upon discrimination against any group of people in public places as an offence. Implementation of reforms also require high degree of national commitment.

Apart from these programmes through which administration has come to the help of disadvantaged sections of the society, administration in a general way has to be fair to all the sections of the society irrespective of caste, community or religion. So far as administration is concerned, there are no permanent minorities; all have to be equal in the eyes of administration. Administration has to withstand illegitimate influences on the part of some vocal sections of the society. Administration has to be neutral and impartial rather than partisan or biased even in the face of pressures.

Administration of this sort is a matter of tradition. Administrators of various services at national and state levels have to be trained from the very beginning to uphold the traditions of fair and impartial administration.

Shib K. Mitra : Professor Satish Chandra has pointed out the distinction between two levels of integration viz., that of the elite and that of the masses. The problems of integration in a composite culture, according to his analysis, lie with the masses in any region. The role of education in achieving integration at the level of masses is crucial and it has to be a national system of education, as he has rightly observed. He has pointed out particularly the colleges which are controlled by dis-integrative forces. This is a point worthy of note, because in many states schools have been taken over by the state Governments and private schools are being increasingly controlled. But the mushroom growth of colleges has gone unabated due to the various parochial, communal and other forces in the society representing vested interests.

Khwaja Ahmad Abbas has pointed out how the entire politics of democracy in our country move around petty and narrow vested interests which divide rather than unite the masses.

If Satish Chandra has raised the question of a national system of Education, and not just a uniform structure, as he has rightly observed, one must ask, whether the political education of the people as indicated by Abbas is not the national system of non-formal education and which is not far more powerful than the entire formal system of education in the country. Although Abbas points out what should be done from kindergarten on wards to inculcate the values of rationalism, humanism secularism, and socialism, the entire effort in this direction by the NCERT has met with tremendous resistance from the states where political education of the kind analysed correctly by Abbas stand against Abbas's ideas in the improvement of education. But one must congratulate Abbas for showing the role which the powerful mass media can play in adult education and life-long education.

Both Satish Chandra and Abbas have highlighted the importance of adult education, because sectarian, parochial and communal politics thrive on illiteracy and poverty. I wish they had mentioned poverty.

Veena Mazumdar has highlighted the problem of inequality of the sexes. She has been waging a war for removal of sexist bias in education and has made the points very forcefully. But she has also pointed out that illiteracy among women is a serious problem. Considering the importance given to adult education, mass education, the media, etc., by Abbas, I think Veena Mazumdar should have raised the question of who controls education

whether formal, non-formal, mass education, media education, etc. Unless there are many more women in positions of power and authority in the field of education, things are not going to change very much from what they are now viz. a Man's world.

From the point of view of the theme of the Conference, Veena Mazumdar has not really grappled with the poignant issues of composite culture and national integration. Just as Kriplani has in his learned paper as well Gill, have done.

Radhey Mohan, one is glad to see, has raised the question of problems of integration arising out of the process of economic growth and the role of political pressure groups in trying to take a larger slice of the cake. He pinpoints the problem when he says that a major cause of cultural tension has been the elitist system of political power. Nevertheless, elitism of some sort prevails in all democracies and, therefore, to emphasise the gap between the power-elites and the masses may not be very appropriate in understanding the threats to our composite culture and national integration. Surely, one would like to reduce the gap, but that requires a firm commitment to education for all and early reduction of poverty.

I find it difficult also to agree to what some of the speakers have said that national integration exists only in the elitist class. National integration and composite culture is not a monopoly of the elites, it is only prudery and make-believe.

K.K. Pillay : Instead of making references to definitions of culture, we should address ourselves to specific problems that are being faced by the country. One speaker actually mentioned that in a vast country like ours, it is not possible to have anything like unity. Well, unity by itself does not mean that all people should think alike, live alike, move alike and address themselves to various problems exactly in the same manner. But there should not be fundamental differences in respect of certain national problems and issues. If views on crucial issues are expressed frankly, discussed thread-bare and some sort of agreement is arrived at, it would be much more desirable than each section maintaining its views, howsoever detrimental to the country they are. That is my contention.

I would deal with one such specific issue, i.e., if allowed to grow may jeopardise the unity of the country. I would confine myself to Tamil Nadu, my state, where and how this idea of separation developed.

Mr. Karunanidhi, then Chief Minister of D.M.K. party favoured this idea to preserve the prime position of the Tamil language as there was an apprehension and which continues even today that Hindi which is a link language will be thrust upon people in Tamil Nadu and also at other places. It is essential for the integrity of the Union and composite culture that there should be one national language. That does, not, however, mean that every one should become proficient in this language and every citizen from Kashmir to Cape Comerin should acquire the same degree of proficiency. Everybody knows that only Hindi is the language which is spoken and understood by majority of people. A sizeable number of people speak Hindi or languages allied to it.

Can Hindi, or should Hindi be our *lingua franca*? That is the first question which deserves attention. Another point, on which many people in North India or those who speak Hindi do not agree, is the position of English. My contention is that English should continue as another important language because of its international status, and availability of literature in various branches of knowledge. For, it will help us keep abreast with developments in areas of knowledge in other countries. The three language formula—Hindi, English and a regional language—seems to be a very sound formula. Though I am aware of the fact that many people in India do not have the patience to learn three languages, or do not feel the utility of it, yet in the interest of national integration, they should be persuaded to do so. No single language, whatever its following, be adopted as the link language, for sooner or later, it would germinate heart burning and thus impair national unity.

Raghubir Singh : Language is a means of communication. That there should be an official formula, comprising three languages, or two language does not seem to be practical. Hindi should not be foisted upon people. More so, the kind of official Hindi which is not understood by common man. We should respect all regional languages, and try to learn as many as possible. In course of time, people themselves, will develop a sort of understanding and adopt a language which will be understood by them. The whole thing will take time, it will be gradual, but it will be lasting.

Anima Bose : My question is, whether we use the word unity or some other expression embodying major trends of different regional cultures, for materialising the idea of oneness or belongingness? We need

transformation of attitudes. With the change in attitudes, the emphasis should shift from this or that to this and that. The individuals should make their choice, and not the elders on their behalf. The attitude of conformity to a pattern either familial, or of the societal should be given up. With the change in attitude, and substitution of the word unity by uniformity, many a problem will be solved. I think, the word uniformity will be more comprehensible to common man.

Niharanjan Ray : I believe, Prof. Pillay has raised a few questions. All these questions, specially the language, one has been discussed during the last so many years. The kind of questions that have been raised show that we have not travelled very far. All these grounds have been covered, not once, but several times. The question of English after 250 years of learning, teaching in our schools and colleges, remains a vital question. But we should realise that English knowing or English speaking people are just 4 percent in the whole country. Therefore, all those who favour for retention of English is for the maintenance and continuation of the interests of this less than 4 percent. Whether it is good or bad, I am not arguing. I am only appealing to you to bear this fact in mind. If you want continuation of English you should state at what level and for what purpose.

Do you want the village peasant who pushes the plough to learn English. We are aiming at universal literacy. Should that literature be in English ? These are basic questions. If you want to perpetuate my interest, yes. It is all right. But I do not want to perpetuate my interest. I want perpetuation of interests of the multitude of Indians who cannot read or write, whose percentage of literacy is very low. Let us not forget it that for the immediate purpose, say for another ten or fifteen years, this literacy has to be in the regional language. Let us not go beyond this, and then the second language.

What should be the second language ? It can only be a language which the majority of Indians understand and which is whether we like it or not, has to be Hindi/Hindustani. I cannot speak Hindi. I do not know it well. I understand Hindustani. That is a different question : whether one likes Hindi which is being officially given to us, or of different kind. For the kind of Hindi different from the official one, we have to sit down with the writers of Hindi. The officials in the Secretariat do not make the

language. It is the writers of the language who make it. The leading scholars from the Hindi speaking region do not write a line in Hindi, because it is the kind of Hindi, they do not understand. I come from Bengal. I am a great lover of my language and literature. But so, I tell you, are even the scientists like Dr. Jagdish Chandra Bose, Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray and Meghnath Sahey. They wrote as many lines in Bengali as they did in English. I have as many pages in Bengali as I have in English. This, the Hindi-world does not practice, and that is where the difficulty is. It is only the poets, the novelists, the dramatists that write in Hindi, and not others. Even their children write in English.

If you want to learn English, I shall not quarrel. The national language has to be one which is understood by all. The Government of India did not come to the three language formula for nothing. A great thought was given behind it.

S.C. Sinha : As far as I see that among the many interesting points raised, the first is that India has a natural way of combining mother tongue and speech, and in that way the natural tendency of civilization has been to develop parochialism and to specify appropriate role for the operation of these bilinguals. When we emerge as a nation, as a polity, which obviously contains many ethnic, linguistic elements, how do we manage the problem of communication across the boundaries of these ethnic entities? On that, the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, namely the emphasis on mother tongue and provincial language, the policy of Hindi or Hindustani as the inter-provincial integrative language, and certain ideas about English as a medium of communication beyond the information are, of course, well-known.

Since independence, we have been very much alarmed by the phenomenon that is of the areas of language communities, which have become boundary markers, loosely labelled as soft nationalism. To what extent linguistic sub-nationalisation, as it is called by specialists, really should alarm us. I think, let us have some discussion on these points and whether do we have a genuine problem of language policy? How do we communicate, apart from the intervention of the policy as natural speech communities?

Sheela Mohan : Gandhiji wanted simple Hindustani. We can have

simple Hindustani with maximum common words from all languages, and likewise also technical terms. So, we can maximise the process of integration. We should have a common script with the maximum of common words in all the languages of our country.

Besides my personal view, however is, that composite culture and the idea of integration do not go together, especially if we emphasize the compositeness of our culture, which means a culture consisting of components of varying degrees of differences and insist on perpetuating these differences. I submit with all humility at my command, that we can never arrive at any kind of national integration.

Unfortunately, the idea of nation came to us during the British period. In Europe itself, it was a new idea propounded by Mezzani, Garibaldi and others in Italy which was a small country. When that idea came here and as we had to fight the imperial regime, we Indianised it. How far we have succeeded in doing that, is still a moot point.

Some of our thinkers like Tagore and others conceived of our country as a garden where many flowers bloomed. We have been hammering this idea, repeating it hundred times. But is it not pertinent that we ask ourselves whether, with all this emphasis on composite culture, we have actually achieved any integration? Has this idea of so many flowers blooming brought us nearer to any kind of unity, to any kind of nationhood?

K. Bhargav : There are people in the country who have been praising culture. And what is culture? Very often it means modes, customs, manners, habits. And what are those manners and habits? Somebody putting on a sort of tilak, a mark on the forehead in order to be different from the other person, his fellow man. Where attitudes of that type are cultivated and people want to look different from each other, how on earth are we going to have any kind of integration, with the insistence that we shall preserve the differences. We are possibly proud that we are the most ancient civilization. I very often think that I am the most unfortunate person to have inherited this culture of the ages. Something so obsolete, some thing which is dead. While every body else is renewing himself, becoming new, trying to do something else, we are stagnating. We are proud of what we were thousands of years ago.

Can we have any kind of national integration on the basis of this

kind of culture? That is the basic question? We should be very clear in our minds what we are at, and how we wish to evolve, or how we wish to become one. How a homogeneous culture is to be achieved? Something practical is necessary. Say, a school uniform common to all the students throughout the country. This sort of uniformity is a step towards integration as every student from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and Bombay to Tezpur be attired alike.

S.C. Sinha : You have made a very clear point. You have raised the issue that the load of diversities that this nation carries is basically a very heavy one and you feel, as well as we understand, that a modern nation must have a much more homogeneous culture. You would also like to have a clearer definition of what are the languages of a modern national culture. I think when you say, building a culture, you feel that there should be a national experience through which a culture will be born. One example that you have given is uniform dress for all the school going children all over the country, inter-dinning and so on.

K. Bhargav : Inter-marriage, *et al.* The important thing is how to proceed?

S.C. Sinha : In this way the details can be worked out.

Sheela Mohan : I think, what is best in all the cultures, should be the basis of our composite culture. What is best in Hindu culture, Christian culture, Islamic culture, Buddhist culture, even what is best in European culture should be the basis for our national culture, i.e., composite culture.

Our Constitution guarantees a social order wherein fraternity, liberty, equality and justice will prevail. Unfortunately, our efforts for equality among men and women have not progressed very much. How can we create equality among different segments of our society? How can we bring all men come nearer to one another? How can we compose the rural and urban differences and create a beautiful India with an international standard of living, discipline and morality that is the main issue?

S. C. Sinha : I think the point has been very well taken, namely you are thinking of some sort of G.C.M. for Indian culture. There can be two sets of G.C.Ms : one is what is the worst in all the cultures and when you make another set of calculations, what is best. Somehow a decision can

be arrived at by which the worst can be eliminated and the best can be collected together.

Ashok Mitra : I think so far as the language problem is concerned we can learn from the Soviet experience where language problem had been more contentious and thorny than the language problem in India. Joseph Stalin adopted the same language as *lingua franca* which was in vogue during Czarist Russia but decreed that all other languages, irrespective of their numerical strength would enjoy equal status and importance. We have a parallel here in that the colonial language, English, which has been favoured by us almost throughout India in preference to any other language. Therein lies a parallel with Soviet Russia.

I am reminded of a situation in 1961 on the occasion of the Census of India. In every centre one of the biggest pile or representations that a Census Commissioner received was from the language group. The second and smaller pile used to be from the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. But the language pile of representations was the heaviest.

My Minister was Govindballabh Pant, and I do not suppose, he had read Stalin. But he had as much appreciation of the problem in his country as Stalin had. He decreed that whatever language a person wished to state must be entered and classified under that particular name. As a result, various dialects of Rajasthani like *Hariti* and so on, or dialects of Bihar like *Maithili* or *Bhojpuri* and so on and so forth, came into their own in 1961. But the Government's administrative or the communication language policy did not change because these languages and their numerical strength was listed. It had a salutary effect as after the 1961 Census, various local tensions largely disappeared. In 1971 this claim was reopened and very many languages were gobbled up under the rubric of Hindi, creating tensions again.

The problem that Dr. Srivastava raises, to my mind, is very similar to it. There is a school of thought which claims, that unless you distribute land to everybody and bring down the ceiling to half a hectare and so on and so forth, the land problem will not disappear from this country. But this again will give rise to another problem, the problem of productivity or production. That you cannot produce surpluses out of half hectares of land, and than therefore, you must cooperativise or collectivise the land so that a certain surplus in productivity is raised, productivity is raised and a certain surplus of the common good, that is the state good, is obtained.

If we apply this principle to the language area, then, I think there is no way out but to recognise the equalness of all languages, whatever they return, because the people will not be happy "unless you recognise my right" to return the language that I speak. As a matter of fact, most of the wars in the world have been fought in some way or other on the question of language. So, I think Dr. Srivastava's point is right and I would plead for it.

While the question of administrative, political and economic integration can go under the rubric of Hindi and English as link languages, the right of each language as a separate language must be recognised. It must be given full play before it loses its power of disruption. I would like to hear Dr. Srivastava's view.

R.N. Srivastava : Basic to all the language conflict is the problem of socio-economic growth of members of a given speech community as a social group. Actually, it is dependent upon the degree to which social mobility is blocked because of the members of a given language. Suppose, you give any language a status or official status, and it blocks mobility of some other speech group, then the conflict starts.

We have got clear evidence of Andhra Pradesh which came into existence because they were not allowed to mark their own self-identity or make their economic growth. Since Government is the main employing agency and a Government job is the main source of social mobility and status uplift, the speech communities which feel handicapped because of it resort to agitation. So, it is not only the identity of language, but what status and role we assign to them and at what level of social stratification we put them? How we integrate them, is a vital question. Besides, I submit that India through historic times allocated social roles to certain languages and they were non-competing and non-conflicting. At present when we assign an official status to a language we have to specify its scope and ensure that it does not impinge upon the freedom of other speech-communities lest conflicts arise.

The second point which I want to make is that, when we talk of bilingualism and multi-lingualism or composite culture, etc., the concept in India has been that there should be a common semantic feature, that is a common cultural value, but self-identity was never asked for. So I differentiated between integration and assimilation. Assimilation is the melting pot where a language loss occurs and culture disappears : that is,

the culture of a minority group disappears. But we never attempted in India to assimilate minorities. We always tried to integrate them.

On surface level we wanted to have some identity for them, but through interaction, we allowed a composite culture to flourish, that is, in linguistic terms I would say, a composite semantic system and a device that we could conceive of Indian languages having one semantics, and different grammatical rules to match it. That is how I want Indian bilingualism should come.

But the three language formula has clearly downgraded the whole of our social set-up. Not only that the three-language formula has downgraded the whole pre-historic experience, but even the way it is being implemented, the way the languages are being modernised, they are building the same type of thing, high level, high speed varieties or standardisation without vernacularisation, creating the same stratification for the language sector.

For examples, Hindi has become a language-burlesque. Common people cannot understand it. What I want to point out is that the Government policy of three-language formula or of language modernisation, has gone astray from the common experience of starting a process, mass education and mass uplift of society.

Roy Burman : I remember one tribe or a cluster of tribes in Manipur. The major tribe is called ANAL. There are three more tribes. In 1950s they were considered to be distinct tribes. But when they found that their community forests were being taken away by incoming people and they had to protect the forests they wanted to unify. They found that the language was a hurdle but it could be an instrument of edification. I am just highlighting that point of the difference between integration and assimilation, how it works, and also how it is linked up with the basic problem of control over the resources and the position of the community in relation to the political power structure. They came together, made an inventory of the different words which were of common use and another inventory of different words. They also decided that on one ceremonial occasion, they would make use of the dialect of one particular group and on another occasion the dialect of another one and so the particular dialect of one group forms the common medium for all the groups on particular ceremonial occasion, otherwise they speak, what they have got,

the symbolic acceptance of not one particular dialect but all the three dialects. But, on three different occasions they speak a particular dialect, and for routine matters they speak their own dialects. This is one type of integration which they tried to achieve. It failed, not because of the failure of the formula, but it was linked up with other factors or other problems, of management and control of the resources.

The reverse of this process is more important when we speak of homogeneity in the national culture including the language. In the Khasi Jaintia Hills, during the colonial rule, the missionary establishments were set up near Cherapunji, the dialect of that area became the standard dialect of the Khasi and Jaintia. Later on, after independence, there was a schism between these two groups. The Jaintias felt that the resources, the forests belonged to them, and that, under the name of the common control or unified identity of the tribe, a hegemony of the other group was being established, which they challenged.

In the wake of that, what happened? For more than 120 years, or so while they had accepted the standardised form of the Cherapunji as a common language, after 130 years it was thwarted. A new cultural movement started by the Jaintias to recognise their dialect as a standard form. And now the new books are being written also in that form.

I think this has got a lesson for us, that is, we cannot isolate in our composite culture, or whatever we call it, a particular aspect of the language culture from the totality of the situation. Today, when there is an upsurge all over the world for broad participation of the people in the democratic control of the means of production, I think, the problem of language also will go through many upsurges and many of the formulae or many types of civilised areas that came into existence, will be in the melting pot, and we shall have to rethink about the whole matter. The crucial yardstick is, as Prof. Mitra has also mentioned in a different manner, that whatever policy we take, ultimately it leads to whether it establishes a particular hegemony in the name of the unity of the nation, or whether it leads to a more broad-based process of participation of the people, a process of liberation or the sovereignty of the individual. Also in the context of a responsible collectivity we will have to think of the whole thing.

S.C. Sinha : Dr. Srivastava has made his points very explicitly that in the Indian civilisational experience, there is a long standing practice of

combining language habits in different social contexts—be it bi-lingualism or multi-lingualism—by which different ethnic groups, living together or coming in contact have been able to communicate.

In a way, in the broadest semantic field we find some kind of common list on an all India level. But even then there have been critical marks across the dialects and languages, that this new phenomenon of political consciousness about language has to be looked into in the context of blockage of mobility, status differentiation, assimetric circulations of opportunities, structure and things of that kind. Prof. Mitra pointed out that throughout human history, language has a basis of cultural identity, as well as social identity which are very important factors. In Soviet Russia, Joseph Stalin seized this problem very rightly and allowed frontier languages and enclave languages to develop upto the highest level, maintaining their influences. He points out how in our country without following Stalin, G. B. Pant, the then Home Minister laid policy guidelines that while noting down languages during census operations of 1961, the people were allowed to express their languages identity in tems of what was commonly believed to be so by them, if that amounted to a very large enumeration of the language and dialects of India.

In later census, there has been a tendency particularly in the field of Hindi to bring down this picture of diversity in favour of a unity. Prof. Mitra's feeling is that language identity is a fundamental primordial identity of people all over the world; that unless that is given a due recognition building the higher linkages it may create problems of integration of the nation.

Of course there are other issues involved here. If we take a very small area, say, Manbhum district, normally it would be regarded that people of Manbhum speak Bengali. But there are Santhals, there are Kharias and others. If you look into the details of language speaking habits, you will find dialects which are hardly understood. (Grierson may call it Bengali but the Polia dialect will be hardly understood by others). Naturally problem comes if we have to teach all communities by mother tongue. How many variations of mother tongue are we to use in this relatively homogeneous areas ?

I am not speaking of Korapur which is far more diversified or Nagaland which is even more diversified. Here within an area of 10 square miles we may have a number of varieties of primary schools with different

dialects, which again demands closer scrutiny, whether they are dialects or languages.

In any case, there are some problems of linguistics. How far we can get towards these languages and dialects in a country like India, where 1800 is just an arbitrary number, it could be 18,000. As you know, 5000 in the number of castes enumerated in 1931 census. It would as well as be 50,000. So that is a situation in which some kind of properly learnt choice has to be worked out if we have to fully utilise the democratic base of language-learning, namely if we have to use the policy that the mother tongue should be the basis of primary education.

Roy Burman brought us to the tribal area and he has given us very interesting examples not to make merely the tribal situations explicit but to show how people utilise their language. After all language is a part of culture and we use language for some social purpose. A social purpose is not only the constitution of our identity but also the management of our resources.

It means not only status but in all other kinds of ethnic situations in India towards various kinds of consolidation which have been going on even in pre-modern period but have made certain new dimensions in modern period, particularly since Independence.

Asok Mitra : A friend of mine in his study of the tribal situation in Jamshedpur area, has discussed nature of cultural decisions that the ethnic groups take when they are encircled by larger communities. He says, if an insisted group is surrounded by a larger group, and if at least the elite of the insisted group become aware that they are being looked down upon by the dominant surrounding group, the subordinate group develops a feeling that it is being humiliated. In other words the group concede rank and once you concede rank irrespective of cultural relativity, the human tendency is to seek rank upwards. In post-independence India, one of the major socio-cultural process has been this accentuation of boundary marks, boundary for boundary sake but boundary for gaining political status by the emerging elite. Language is one such phenomenon, it can elicit loyalty of the masses, too, besides the elite. This process will go on in the Indian sub-continent as long as the economic opportunities do not open up in a much

more massive manner. The other phenomenon which Roy Burman has pointed out is that under the pressures of industrialization and homogenisations ethnic groups and other primordial groups are seeking identities in a new manner and in that again language plays a role.

Today, we have no other alternative but to build up the case of participation in nation building, forgetting the concept that the nation must have an absolutely homogeneous culture and homogeneous language which of course, is not possible even at the family level. Intelligent people learn to live with diversities at the national level though there have to be some norms of communication which can be brought about by a certain phasing of experience.

About the point that everyone should put on the same uniform in all the schools I submit that it may not be a very attractive proposal but has some sense. The nation will have to be guided through a phasing of experience, but it should not forget that its inherent strength, lies in unity in diversity.

Many modern nations all over the world are after seeking diversity and we are here who have learned to live with diversity. It may be pointed out that the urban notion is that it is not possible to have joint family, have kinship relation. But that is just a notion; that it is just stereotyped. After all there is the industrial experience on the way by which the Indian people are able to adjust themselves to the various situations and produce things by which we live. We must have a much more authentic view of how Indian people have been able to deal with their requirements and to lead in the modern world, and how to deal with their linguistic problems and other problems of culture. Most of our requirements indicate that the kind of antagonism between science and folk idioms of lives that we imagine in the past is not there in terms of many things that are observed. So, I think, it would be very preposterous and not very judicious to start building a nation on an unsound assumption about the nature of our society and civilisation. Our society from tribal to urban spectrum is able to deal with property, with various kinds of constraints including the problem of language communication. I think, we are gradually getting to learn about the nature of our society, the nature of our civilisation and also how to build up the nation.

S.C. Shina : Now I would request Dr. Roy Burman to talk about Tribes of India—shift from majority to minority complex.

Roy Burman : What I would like to highlight is not culture as such, but the culture at the secondary level of which the primary concomitant is other issue—the issue of the control over the resources of forests, participation in political forces and so on. From this base, I shall try to bring out some basic questions. I would like to mention that the problem of integration of the tribals in India is not necessarily that of a primitive society in the largest context.

My submission is that basically the tribal problem today is the problem of the minorities. The minority, when it perceives itself as a minority, it is not only in terms of their numerical strength but in terms of other basic social problems. In fact, I submit that until recently, the tribals, the bulk of them, perceived themselves as a majority. They constitute 7 per cent of the population of the country. But paradoxically their perception as a minority is an attribute of modernisation. This 7 per cent of the tribal population, lives at the *taluk* level where it is majority. When we consider the level of technology, their educational attainments, etc, we see that their aspirations and motivations are also confined at that level. Their control over resources is at *taluk* the level and so also their political control. Their status in the political society is at the *taluk* level at the maximum, and not beyond this. When it is confined to that level they are the majority people. With modern education and penetration of market forces in that area, they feel that their position is threatened.

Some how they feel that the present education breeds inactivity. There is one small tribal community called Tota. A Tota leader once told me that your development was inferior. In a Tota house, there are three parts. One part is for the head of the house with wife and unmarried children. Another for the unmarried daughter and her lover, and the third one for the guests. In your house, said the Tota leader, you don't have any place for your unmarried daughter and her lover. You do not understand the natural law and do not have a rational system as base of your cultured organisation. This is how he perceived. Some of the Totas who are educated, think in a different manner.

We have got six states and union territories where the tribals are in majority. In the national situation they consider themselves as a minority.

It is true that unlike the 30's and 40's when the centralisation process was on or even in early 50's which show the trend towards the modern township today there is a counter-centralisation process working. But so far as the tribal situation is concerned we find a conscious process of re-vitalisation of their culture and also of old traditions. It is linked up with another sad story of our national liberation struggle. In the 19th Century at the time of colonial rule, the main resource of the tribals, the forests, were declared as reserve forests. These reserve forests were kept for the supply of timber or wood for industrial commercial purposes. The forests were taken away for the colonial market. There was resistance to it at that time. But the problem of forests was not looked upon as a part of the national struggle except in isolated instances. Even today the position relating to forests, their relationship of resources and its way to markets as economic factor has not been correctly analysed. As a result the isolation continues. In fact, what is needed is the re-constructing of our approach towards the tribals, setting aright the negatives of the colonial policy which reduced the forest resources. However, there has been some indication of a new awareness in some of the States. But the hard question of tribal integration remains. So far as the tribes are concerned, we have to take into account certain realities. Firstly, tribal people do not want individual rights to be recognised. They prefer corporate rights over the resources. Corporate rights are not going to be the basis of modernisation. Whatever legislation we pass against alienation of tribal land means nothing, because that is a negative policy. The negative policy will not help so long as the base is not retained.

In some of the modern States, for example New Zealand, the Maori Incorporation Act, is the basis for modernisation of Maoris and large incorporations are functioning among them. That has been a crucial element of the whole policy of the organisation of State factor there. Such a thing we have to consider in our context and only when we do it, we would succeed in creating conditions which facilitate communication between the tribals and the rest of the country.

Kapila Vatsyayan : I have a very brief point to make about Prof. Burman's paper, a totally different point of view, but getting perhaps to the same conclusion. One of the thing about India, and this, he has tried to say, is the many parts of mobility which we have continuously dug up for integration at different levels of society, at different regions, linguistically, culturally in terms of a variety of other systems of strategies. In

this process, certain systems have come into being and that there is little either in books of history or economics or even anthropology, not to speak of books on religion or culture. Therefore, let there be a fresh look. Let there be a proper study of the social situation. I will go a step further. In addition to the area of equalisation of the society, there are other areas of living, where not enough work has been done, I am referring to only formulations. This pertains to the same people being transformed and this refers to what Prof. Roy Burman has said—the so called high culture. For example, the Jagnnath Puri is a tribal cult. How many of our books on sociology tell us even of a more accepted god like Siva, and of his beginning? And if we were to do this in terms high cultural level, in a lower technology and economic level in the making of India, especially to those who are educated, but ignorant Indians, I think that we will have done a very great service to the authenticity of this culture.

Bhatia : Granting economic alienation is conceded by Government policy, granting that the right to land is restored to the tribals, the pressures of organisation, be they economic or of industrialisation, are still likely to be there which will erode their basic life-styles. A mere restoration of the land rights or ownership rights does not somehow alleviate their problem which they are facing, a situation that they are either to give up their own culture or to implant the majority culture of that particular region on them. To my mind, the question is not simple—one of replacement. The tribal is facing a problem where he has to adjust within his own life-style and the facets of the majority culture. I think with that comes the question of stratification and the alienation.

Roy Burman : The question actually is that in most of the areas where they reside, their tradition of corporate ownership over the lands or the forests is sometimes recognised in law, and where it is not recognised in law, it is recognised in the tribal society. Among themselves, they recognise it. Besides, when the land is put to new use, say, an industrial project is introduced there, or the forest is developed for modern forestry, is it always necessary that their corporate rights should be extinguished? Can't it be incorporated in the new pattern? In the case of forests, the local communities should be persuaded to develop forestry by giving incentives, and support. Though this policy which was not earlier

has been introduced, yet there is a logical flaw in implementation, which differs from State to State. For instance in some of the States tribal community itself, if there are no institutions which can manage the forests, be allowed to manage through their own institutions. The other approach is that the forests be taken over by the Forest Department and they share the profits. My point is that let them try to make use of their own institutions. The Forest Department has a technical role. Let it give technical guidance. If the tribal community has got a right over the forests, a part of income can be used for the institutions or Government Departments to partially meet their expenses which can serve as links between the community and the Government. This is one type of approach. About industries very few people know what has happened in tribal areas where the industries have been introduced, the tribals have frequently not been the beneficiaries. At the time of constructions they have been utilised as unskilled labour. But later on, they are not on the muster roll. They have even been pushed out of the land, although they have been given compensation. In some areas, compensation is quite generous and they have also been given other supports. Even then what has happened? It has led to the pauperisation of the community.

Here the question is, should we pay compensation for an economy which is disappearing? Why not give them their rights in the new economy that is coming up. They can be considered as partners in the new industry which is coming up and they can be given proportionate shares. With the payment of compensation, given them as revocation or grant or whatever it is, let them be share holders in the new economy that is coming up. That will integrate them.

Once that happens, then the type of resistance the tribals are having against modernisation would cease. Actually, it is a technical advance, it is not modernisation which would have so many different indicators: the social goals, the overall national policy incorporated in the new structure. That has not happened. While planning we should take into consideration all the indicators—the social goals, the overall national policy must also be integrated and incorporated in the new structure that is emerging now.

Krishna Kiplani : Prof Ashok Mitra will enlighten us on 'Implications of the Sex Ratio in India's Population'.

Ashok Mitra : Why did I choose this particular subject ? I thought that the relationship between man and woman in several regions of this great country, in various social, political, economic strata of this country, is one of fundamental importance, that any disturbance or any deterioration in the structure and in the relationship between the sexes cannot but have very deep impact on the economic, political and administrative spheres.

Prof. Khan referred to the "Unity in diversity" and what I am suggesting is also a case for unity in diversity because there is a tremendous unity in the deterioration that is already taking place in the sex ratio, disfavours women as a class, and the diversity exists in the rate of decline of the sex ratio in various states. The difference in sex ratio has exercised the minds of thinkers particularly Census Commissioners and people concerned with population ever since about 1880 or 1881.

The 1889 report, comments on under-remuneration of females and also on "the real deficiency in the number of females, extending to about the twentieth year, more or less due to neglect, functional excitement, premature cohibition and unskilful midwifery. In addition, it has been noticed that in all families there has been very differential high mortality of females, despite the fact that males were subjected to greater hazards and exposures to diseases and also due to exigencies of females than women themselves.

I have divided the country for this specific purpose into two main categories. In category one I place average which is well above the all-India average; and in category two where the sex ratio is well below the average. The states which are well above the all-India average in the sex ratio, are Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. The States which have been below the average in the sex ratio, have been Assam, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab including Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir.

A very interesting factor which emerges is, that irrespective of the fact, whether in a particular state, the sex ratio is above or below the all-India average, we find that except for a few states like Assam, and particularly Punjab and Rajasthan, all other States have been showing a diminishing sex ratio continuously right from 1921-1971.

Bihar started with a sex ratio of 1016 in 1921 and in the course of just 55 years, the sex ratio has gone down to 956. In Orissa from 1086, it went down in the course of 50 years to 989. Several States were well below the average for India. But Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and Assam have really improved its sex ratio during the last 50 years. There are reasons for it because Assam has not seen wholesale migration of males, particularly after the stoppage of indentured labour.

In Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana the improvement in the sex ratio has had a good effect as it led to the improvement of social and economic conditions. Gujarat and Maharashtra are peculiar. There has been a steady deterioration from 1921 to 1950. In Gujarat the sex ratio was 944 in 1921 and in 1971 it was 936, Maharashtra was 950 in 1921 and 932 in 1971).

A study conducted at the Jawaharlal Nehru University goes into great detail about sex ratio district by district in all the 84 districts of India. It shows very interesting variations. The variations are not only inter-State, but they are inter-trade variations, inter-district variations and even inter-village variations. Some of it might be due to migration but it is not always the effect of migration.

Everyone will agree that one of the reasons for female deaths was due to purdah-system. This is mentioned in 1891. But we all know that in the course of the last 50 years, purdah is largely disappearing. Even in the most orthodox homes purdah is not observed with the rigour of 50 years ago or 30 years ago. But the over crowding has increased, housing has deteriorated. The ventilation has deteriorated, particularly in slum areas.

The people who suffer from this deterioration are women, not men, because men live a part of their daily life at any rate, out-of-doors and women—the vast majority of particularly in urban areas—are compelled to spend most of their lives indoors and within the houses. If conditions in housing do not improve rapidly, women's and children's health is bound to suffer.

The All India and State Census reports have laid great emphasis on the following :

- (a) Female infanticide, especially at earlier ages;
- (b) Premature cohibition and child-bearing with unskilled mid-wifery;
- (c) Hard work among females, particularly among the lower income groups which constitute the bulk of the nation and generally adverse conditions of climate, malnutrition, lack of proper ventilation, accommodation etc.

To all these causes operating more fiercely today than 50 years ago, not excluding female infanticide, bride burning has been added.

The most important thing is that the estimate in the death rates per thousand have been going higher and higher, but the fall has been much less among males than females.

For instance in 1901, the death rate is 50 and 49.9 for males and femaes. The death rate for females is slightly less. But in 1971, the death rate has largely gone down, i.e, for males it is as high as 23.4. The point is that the gap between male and female survival, between male and female wellbeing has been widening dramatically since 1951.

I think that the enormity of neglect that attends female babies and young girls is from brith to about age 9. The selective neglect has been growing between 1941-50, 1961-70 compared to male mortality. The point is that the neglect in former years has been reflected only in the age group of 0 to 2. The neglect has been growing over the ages and the neglect of female babies and girls is noticeably very strong even upto the age of 9.

After 15, the selective mortality rate of females begins in a different kind of way through marriage and child birth and utter neglect. In the earlier period from 1921-1931 the mortality of females in each of the ages 0 to 5 was in each decade substantially lower than that of male babies, except for ages 4 to 6 in 1901, where the former was slightly higher. Not so in the later period of 1940-1970. A very substantial change had occurred in the course of 1931-1951, for except for age 0, the mortality of females at each of the ages 1 to 9 was notably higher than that of males for each of the census year in the period 1941-50 to 1961-70.

In 1951, female mortality at age 15 was notably lower than the male mortality rate at the age, but this favourable picture was reversed in no

uncertain terms particularly in 1971. The mortality among females increased proportionately more than among males. This has been marked even in Madras. But in Madras and Kerala, women seem to have faced better than in other regions.

It is difficult to say how much of the differential improvement between ages 15 and 30 in the southern zone should be attributed to the difference in the process of age smoothing adopted in 1931 and 1951, but even this improvement between ages 15 and 30 was lost in the decade 1961 and the loss was maintained in 1971.

So far as life expectancy is concerned, it is calculated that for every life at age 1, the life of females in 1971 was short by 4.7 and 6.9, and this increased from 4.7 in 1951 to 6.8 in 1971. The ratio between females dying at the age 15-24 to the ratio of males dying at the age of 15-24 is only 39 per cent in the USA. It is 51.5 in Japan. It is 49 per cent in Singapore and 39 per cent in the U.K. It is as high as 163 in India.

Of deliberate female infanticide there is no evidence in any part of the country. Some 30 to 35 years ago, it was a custom in Saurashtra that as soon as a girl baby was born, the family used to get a pot of milk and the girl baby was drowned in the pot of milk. The custom was called *doodh bibi*. But even up to the age of 8 or 9, with regard to female babies, there is plenty of evidence even now, which shows that girl babies were neglected. Dr. V.M. Dandekar, has taken evidence from a large number of hospitals and dispensaries in rural areas, and has found that on account of the paucity of amenities and because of demands made by males, women—whether girl babies, young girls or adult or middle aged women get far less treatment by way of normalcy in Government hospitals and dispensaries than men. Besides, in villages, the treatment which women receive is traditional or household. The SRS analytic series show high mortality by other causes. Killer diseases from which girl babies, young and adult women suffer and succumb are more compared to men. The diseases are gastro-enteritis, colitis and broncho pneumonia and heavy incidence of aminosis and other deficiency diseases.

This brief account has its counterpart in many other spheres of national life, where women are deprived and should be put on par with other problems of national integration. Unless, we do not improve the conditions of work for women, the conditions of acquiring knowledge for

women, the conditions of living, child bearing, education, female participation in all spheres of public life and improvement in their status by improving the economic value of women, we shall not achieve national integration in real sense.

Declining proportion of females and the high rate of maternal mortality underline several serious shortcomings in our national life. They show how rudimentary and patchy our maternal and child health services are in spite of the investments made and the promise of more. MCH services have not yet, to flog a cliché, touched the fringe of the problem. And unless the MCH Services develop, it will be very difficult to solve the problems of nutrition and family planning. Elementary education among women has to be stepped up. In the 1971 census, we made a sub-regional distribution of literacy among women which revealed that in as many as 69 districts out of 264 in the whole of India the rural literacy rate, namely ability to read and write, not of any sort of formal education is only less than 4 or so, and in the districts the female literacy—is not more than 6 or 7 per cent of all women that means almost half of the total districts of India. The number of districts in which the literacy of women is more than about 16 or 17 per cent is only about 80 to 90.

If we have this picture of literacy among women, what kind of active national integration can we think of? After all, women are the basic motivating force of national integration in all spheres of national life. Lacking in education, women will not be mindful of their due and will continue to lack the wherewithal with which to improve their state or assert their right to health. Excessive child bearing and interrupted span of life, as has already been observed earlier, limits employability and wages.

Women are deprived of the opportunities to increase their skills over time and are liable to serious interruptions in whatever work they are employed. This perpetuates the vicious circle of low wages and low skills and shuts out employment in all but the areas of traditional skill in vocations that are but another name of a way of life like traditional agriculture.

Women have been increasingly shut out from those organised sectors of industry which demand more of technical as well as minimal levels of formal education to understand and run complicated machinery

and coordinate with complete assembly and flow-line arrangements. This has a direct consequence on the national income even as it has on per capita and household income, in which women's contribution in cash term is always regarded as marginal although their labour, is on the whole, more than men's for home making and for bringing up the nation. The most important consequence is the diminution of the economic value and status of women. The cheapness of female lives and their expendable character attract burdens of repeated child bearing, for that is what they are normally regarded as fit for. This has the effect of pushing up the number of pregnancies and births per woman. This is their prime function by which their value is judged and this attitude is by no means conducive to family planning.

Women are put to hardships with child bearing even as there is a belief in certain modern technologies that the machine must be flogged to yield the maximum in the minimum time before it is replaced. High mortality among women automatically brings in its wake high mortality among infants and very young children and reinforces the desire for more children that are needed as insurance against death. High mortality attracts high replacements and this does not augur well, for voluntary population limitations, which and not government enforced termination, must be one of the prime ingredients of what passes for quality of life.

Amina Bose : Mr. Mitra, whether you see any difference among women belonging to communities say, the Christians, Anglo-Indian or Parsis, as these communities have more educated women and it should make a significant difference.

Asok Mitra : As a matter of fact, we have found quite a lot of difference among communities of other religions. But the difference is largely disappearing. It has been alleged that the Muslim community has a much higher birth rate and higher fertility rate than the Hindu community in general. But it has been found in surveys in Delhi, Hyderabad, Lucknow and various other places where the Muslims are in a majority or are in substantial numbers, that the performance really depends on education, income and living conditions. Wherever the educational level, the income level, the job level, the status level is high, differences between religious communities are almost non-existent. This has been the repeated finding in sample survey after sample survey.

Veena Mazumdar : I think, Dr. Bose, when you say that communities

in which women have greater opportunities for education whether they show any difference to communities where women have less education.

Amina Bose : Yes.

Veena Mazudar : The total percentage of literate women in this country is only 18 per cent; the total percentage of women who have received any kind of education at all is only 10 per cent of the female population and if we can keep these figures in mind, I think the question, whether education makes a difference to the kind of problems that Dr. Mitra has been highlighting, becomes marginal, the educated women are the marginal groups and whatever difference exists amongst us, cannot make any difference in the total context of the total population that Dr. Mitra has been bringing before us.

I would refer to a case study completed in the Delhi University, Department of Sociology on infanticide of female in south Gujarat and Rajasthan which shows that female infanticide exists only among those communities where women were not economically active. It has listed the actual castes which did practice this custom and there were also castes which practice hypergamy, that is they always try to marry their women to a higher caste group. It has drawn a direct relationship between economic activity and hypergamy and female infanticide.

Women who are economically active, they are not killed. We have no direct evidence about female infanticide. But the Council for Social Development did a study in the States of Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya on the status of women and family planning. The analyses of the data from Haryana regarding female infant mortality shows resumption of female infanticide both overt and covert.

Bhatia : Dr. Mitra, has referred to the question of national income. In calculating the national income or per capita income why household work is not given a due share in converting it into cash so that women who work at home are given a kind of cash coupons by society which they can encash, if they so desire. After all, this labour is utilised and certain costs are being awarded to the family. She is contributing in that respect. In fact, our per capita income or per family income is counted in cash terms, not in the kind of labour that is already put in. So, on an average if a man is earning Rs. 300/- he is supplementing another

Rs. 300/- by reason of the great deal of work that is being done not only in the house but also by way of education of his children by the women of the house. Isn't there a way by which this can be accounted for in cash terms ?

Asok Mitra : After all national income is based on total production. A man and his wife are producing Rs. 300/- worth of production. It is true that the housewife is a family worker and the work of both goes to produce Rs. 300/- worth. If you put a money value on the wife's work that does not mean that the total product is going up. The total product is the same so at the national level also the total product is the same whereas you have merely divided the entire product into two factors. As a result, you are taking credit for unpaid family work in the national income. But this you are merely introducing the demographic element of numbers but not increasing the productivity.

Bhatia : I was saying that women's work is not at all accounted for. She is producing a gross national product which is not being recognised.

Asok Mitra : The man is producing Rs. 300/- not by himself. The man, if he has to do all the household chores, that the woman does, will be producing Rs. 150/- or Rs. 180/- and the woman will be producing Rs. 120/-. The total product from that family comes to Rs. 300/- so nothing is gained in national income.

Devika Jain : You were referring to occupational structures. Can you give a little more data on the matter and the reasons for it ?

Asok Mitra : I will certainly be happy to present all the data that I have over the last 50 years. I will just give you some instance. I have mentioned some figures previously in my presentation. In 1951 Bengal Census of which I was the incharge I found the total number of women employed in 1901 in Bengal was 1,18 million. In 1951, this figure had gone down to 600,000. In 1961 it went down further to 505,000 and in 1971 it went down to 500,000. What is availed of by way of status of women and their economic well being and the national well being remains to be seen. If we find, say, a 300 per cent increase in the number of women employed, in the conspicuous sectors of government services particularly in superior government services, the I.A.S. etc., or in the lines of Professors,

Scientists working in Laboratories and so on and so forth, by contrast we find something like 2000 per cent decline in such areas as agriculture, industry, household industry, transport and other services

Compared to about 8 lakh declines in traditional sectors of industry and agriculture in West Bengal, we find little more than 200,000 increase in some of the modern sectors like nursing, teaching and other services, particularly those requiring white collar jobs. There has been a steep and steady decline of women labour in organised services especially those requiring training in machinery. Similarly, women suffer for vertical mobility because the training facilities for women are minimal. A certain sort of rise in employment in the sophisticated industries like electronics and assembling electronic machinery, etc., is there. But there too women are recruited at certain age selection basis when their fingers remain nimble. For instance, they are selected from the age group of about 17-18 to 30-31. If you go to any electronic factory, you will not find many women above the age of 30 working—watch making shops in HMT factory, or any electronic factory or HEL or Electronics Corporation. Besides, wherever some sort of training as blue print reading or working on floor lines or floor charts is involved, you will not find many women working. This is because training is not given to them. Of course, their activities are interrupted by child-bearing or illness in the family and so on and so forth. They consequently go back to the end of the scale and start again. This happens also in the formal sector.

Devika Jain : I think we should separate the two issues : (a) measuring the female labour (b) nature of work. The whole area is very vital for understanding employment policies, and unemployment figures, On the national income part, I am submitting to Dr.Mitra, though he is right that basically it is only aggregating to what is already measured, there are areas of estimates of methodology which modify even national income estimates.

Asok Mitra : I have just one comment in respect of Mrs. Jain's presentation, and that is on the area of control. We know that although women are in many families quite helpless, they still manage as they used to manage very large nexus of cash and property by their supreme position as mother-in-law or mother. But even this control over the cash nexus or the property is giving way. In many modern households, where both man and wife work, it has become almost a fashion and a custom for the man's

incomes to be entirely deposited in the bank and the household being run on the wife's earnings at least in some regions of India.

About a few years ago, in the south, I think anybody from Kerala or Tamil Nadu or Mysore will bear me out that women used to control a lot of funds especially what is known as the chit fund, the jewellery fund, the grain fund and so on. In this particular regard, Kerala was the shining example. Even there women are being deprived of the cash nexus by their own earnings, or the kind of control that they earned on the household expenses. They used to secret a little cash and operate the chit fund thereby, extended their cash reserves which enabled them some kind of influence upon the family or in its decision making areas. That too has been disappearing under the institutional spread of banks and various other institutions. Unfortunately, even the modern spread of bank institutions, which are such good things, have certain deleterious effect upon the control of women over cash.

Krishna Kriplani : I would request Veena Mazumdar to present her views on Education as an instrument for equality of the sexes. It is a very relevant topic.

Veena Mazumdar : There is a process of national change where women always have a right. But there are some contradictions which account to a certain extent for our failure to deliver the goods through this instrument. Since 19th century education has been regarded in most countries as the most powerful instrument to improve the status of women. In India the question of improving the women's status became identified at least officially with the achievement of equality between men and women since 1931 when the Indian National Congress accepted equality between sexes as its social goal.

The promise was incorporated in the Constitution and the Directive Principles of State Policy. The founding fathers' continued faith in universal education for men and women equally was one of the main instruments for this purpose. The other two instruments on which they pinned their faith was equal political and legal rights for women. Women's right to education was propagated as essential to achieve the goals set before the nation.

To quote from a report by the Secondary Education Commission which says in 1953 : "In a democratic society where all citizens have

to discharge their civic and social obligations differences which may lead to variations in the standard of intellectual development achieved by boys and girls cannot be envisaged". This represents, in a way, the high water mark of the same ideal that led the Founding Fathers of the Constitution to incorporate equality between sexes as one of the goals for the society.

The Constitution sought to achieve redistribution of political and economic power through various measures, but education was seen as the crucial level to bring about this expected transformation in our social life. Yet, the experience of the last 36 years shows, that our efforts at social engineering have not eliminated inequities among different groups, sexes or regions. On the other hand, the Committee on the Status of women in India found evidence of "further lowering" of women's status and commented on "a process of regression from some of the norms developed during the Freedom Movement". They also noticed declining social concern for women and their problems, and complete collapse of the social debate regarding men and women status, how to bring about improvement in the relationship between men and women and women's positions in Society.

The story of women's education, in a way, is interesting because it reads very clearly this failure and the contradictions that have come to characterise, not only the whole story of changing women's status, but of the Indian Educational System. On the one hand we have achieved fantastic progress in higher education with women constituting nearly 25 per cent of the university population, a record which is envied by women in many developed countries. On the other hand, women account for the largest group among the illiterates.

Between 1951 and 1971 the total number of illiterate women changed from 161.9 million to 215.3 million. Now this increase can be explained away by increasing population, since we claim, in the same year, 1971, 69 per cent of girls in the 6-11 age group, were enrolled in schools.

Data on enrolment of girls at different levels of school system portrays a steadily rising coverage but that still leaves us with a large majority of illiterate women who are outside the reach of the school system and will remain for the rest of their lives for the simple reason that they are older. Sixty Seven per cent of women in the 15-24 age group and 89 per cent of women in the 25 age group are illiterate.

Illiteracy is concentrated not only in certain age groups but also in some regions, communities and classes. Female literacy rate varies from 53.9 per cent in Kerala to less than 9 per cent in Rajasthan. The Committee on the Status of Women identified the status of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh as most backward in development of women education. Even within the states, there is gross disparity between different districts. Illiteracy and lack of formal education continue to be very high among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Muslims women.

The Committee on Status of Women pleaded that plans for educational development which did not include special priority measures to remove these imbalances within women's education itself, will only contribute to the increase in inequalities.

One has to note that this is the characteristics of the educational system throughout the third world and it just does not apply to women but it applied to total population.

Education-watchers all over the world are beginning to admit that instead of being the great leveller that education has been accepted to be, the development of education, at least in the third world countries, has introduced a new factor of inequality. This is particularly evident in the case of women. The gap in status, life styles, aspirations and communication between educated and the uneducated women today is far greater than the gap that existed earlier between high status and low status of women, dictated by caste, religion and other cultural factors.

Even among the educated, there are sharp divisions—determined by generation, class and training. One can go on multiplying the kind of illustration about gap between educated and difference between the 'mods' and the behenjies—terms with which the Delhi Public ought to be familiar—may be pronounced in the metropolitan cities, but they indicate a trend which is fast spreading to other centres, and whose influence should not be under-rated. Nor should these groups be identified—this is a mistake which is very often made that the 'mods' represent the emancipated and the 'behanjis' represent traditional women. This is a classification with which I do not agree and I will just try to explain why.

Emancipation or liberation can be interpreted in many ways. The leaders of the movement for women's equality during the twenties and

thirties of this century differed radically from the earlier social reforms in their view of the goals of social development. The earlier reformers had seen education as an instrument to improve women's efficiency to perform any other roles in the society. Their intention was, in effect, to strengthen existing social structure and hold of tradition through the family as basic social unit.

Unbanisation, modernisation of the economy and westernisation through the 'English' system of education are creating very severe pressures on society and creating communication gaps between men and women and thereby eroding authority of family. Women's education was advocated to arrest this problem. Greater efficiency on the part of women in performing her familiar roles as wife and mother, they believed, would increase her status within her family. Since women had been always regarded as more attached to tradition than men, enhanced dignity and authority for women within the family, they felt, would strengthen hold of tradition and the authority of family in society.

Leaders of the women's movement, on the other hand, emphasised equality between sexes as a basic principle on which reconstruction of Indian society was to take place. They were not out to perpetuate or strengthen the existing social structure. Their inspiration came not from the defenders of the Indian social structure, but from rebels—Jyotiba Phule or Lokhitawad Gopal Hari Desmukh—who saw subjugation of women as an instrument to perpetuate Brahminical or castes dominance in Indian Society or from the revolutionaries who accepted women into their ranks or equally committed to the cause of freedom from alien rule and above all from Mahatma Gandhi, who believed that social revolution of his dream would be impossible without equal rights and responsibilities for women.

Ideas which proclaimed woman to be inferior or less capable, fit only to be his play thing were, in his view only man's interested teaching and the product of 'his greed for power and fame'.

I quote "Women is the companion of men gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minute details of the activities of men, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he . . . By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and

worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have."

Inspired by these ideas, the women's movement saw emancipation as not merely release from oppressive customs that reduced women's position within the family but as equality of opportunity, equality in responsibility and autonomy to choose one's role, to participate in all aspects of social life, particularly in the struggle for freedom and national reconstruction. Education, in their view, has to be an instrument for these wider responsibilities and roles, and no longer the limited tool for manufacturing better mothers and wives.

This view has been persistently advocated by women leaders in India. I have given just a few illustrations, but, one can go on adding to this : a representative meeting by university women to the Calcutta University Commission in 1918, the National Committee on Women's Education which reported in 1959, the Committee of Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls, which reported in 1964. Each of these was the result of the efforts of women leaders and every one of them was against any differentiation in educational policy for boys and girls.

Women's education ought to be a part and identical of a total educational policy that was being developed for the whole population. This view was endorsed by even non-Women expert bodies after independence, the five (First) year plan, the Secondary Education Commission of 1953 and the Education Commission of 1966. In spite of this repeated reiteration of what we should take as policy about women's education, it is amazing to see how the older, reformist view continues to influence policies towards women's education. The Radhakrishnan Committee on University Education 1948 might be excused for overlooking all non-familiar dimensions of women's lives because of its date, but no such excuse can be offered for the document produced by the NCERT in 1975. The International Women's year, on approach to the 10-year school curriculum, which reads like a throw-back to the 19th century. The girls in schools are again being primarily as destined to be home-made girls, mothers : so the things they must be thought are home science, child care and things like that.

The imprint of this attitude is visible in the persistent differentiation of curricula with home science, drawing, painting, music, etc., open only

to girls—they are still open only to girls in many states—as alternative to compulsory mathematics for boys and the lack of options for good basic training in hard subjects like maths and sciences in many institutions open for the exclusive use of girls students. Even now the differentiation is apparant in the pattern of 'work experience' for girls in most schools including coeducational schools run by the Government of India. My children go to a Central School. I have one daughter and one son. My son is being taught carpentry, labour craft; my daughter is being taught some needle work and knitting that we learnt when we went to exclusive schools for girls.

The United Nations' World Plan of Action for the International Women's Decade admits that this kind of discrimination is widely prevalent in the educational systems of most of the countries.

I quote : 'Girls' choice of areas of study are dominated by conventional attitudes, concepts, and notions concerning the respective areas fo men and women in society.

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The inequality of sexes begins with differences in socialisation practices for boys and girls. Instead of being combated by the educational system, it is being strengthened by the latter through such biases in curricula, training and attitudes of teachers and general educational policies'.

Even analysis of text books reveal the operation of this bias in images, roles and values projected for and about women. Commenting on new values, and the new kind of society which we were set out to do in 1947, the Committee on the Status of Women observed : 'If education is to promote equality for women, it must make a deliberate, planned and sustained effort so that the new value of equality of sexes can replace the traditional value system of inequality. The educational system today has not even attempted to undertake this responsibility. In fact, the schools reflected and strengthen the traditional prejudices of inequality through their curricula, the classification of subjects on the basis of sex and the unwritten code of conduct enforced on their pupils The concomitant of equality is responsibility of all and unless this is admitted by men and women equally, the desired transformation of our society will receive a severe

setback. This is one area where a major change is needed in the content and organisation of education.”

The World Plan of Action of the United Nations, emphasising the need for positive and affirmative action to eliminate discriminatory attitude and to inculcate value of sex equality, suggests certain specific measures, e.g. .—

- (i) Evaluation of text books and other teaching material to eliminate existing biases ;
- (ii) Revision of teaching methods to ensure that “they are adapted to national needs and promote changes in discriminatory attitudes.”
- (iii) Promotion of research “to identify discriminatory practices”;
- (iv) Encouragement of co-education and mixed training groups to “provide special guidance to both sexes in orienting them towards new occupations and changing roles”;
- (v) Vocational and career guidance programmes to encourage boys and girls “to choose a carrier according to their real aptitudes and abilities rather than on the basis of deeply ingrained sex stereotypes”;
- (vi) Development of information and formal and non-formal educational programmes to increase awareness and acceptance of the public, teachers and others regarding the need to educate and train girls for occupational life; and
- (vii) Development of integrated or special training programmes for girls and women in rural areas to increase their participation in economic and social development.

On the basis of the recommendation of the Committee on the Status of Women, and in response to the directive which came from the U.N. General Assembly in September 1975, the Government of India framed a National Plan of Action for Women. The Plan states clearly that the objectives of women’s education “cannot be different from those relating

to men", and specifies certain particular objectives, that is that women must be prepared to fully participate in social and productive work, biases against women must be made aware of their social, legal and economic rights; they must develop self-reliance and economic independence; they must accept the idea of equality and participation in development; and above all, "to find full expression of her talent, ability and personality to enable her to escape the bonds of superstition and obscurantism". A lot of very good words ! However, that is for the objectives.

In the specific measures suggested in the National Plan itself, traces of the (concept) developed that I have mentioned earlier and the old biases are not altogether absent. I just give a few examples.

I quote : Special efforts should be made to enlarge the scope and coverage of pre-school education programmes, like *balwadies* and *anganwadis*, where the older girls can be given practical work experience and child-care."

"The curriculum of the middle school stage needs to be given strong work experience orientation, introducing girls to crafts and skills which will be of direct use to them in the family, community and farm. It should introduce girls to scientific knowledge, principals of homemaking, family life, education, nutrition and diet, environmental education and civic education." What happened to the whole business of economic independence, etc. ? Nobody knows !

"The primary teacher training course should be revised to prepare trainees for their special responsibility in promoting girls education in rural areas, 'especially in adapting the content to suit the needs and interests of girls."

"The objectives of vocational training programmes for girls school drop-outs 'should be to render them self-sufficient in home management". They have always been self-sufficient in home management. We do not need schools to tell us.

Ragubir Singh : But they should always keep the psychic make up and quickness and fitness for certain jobs. It is not possible to treat

everything with absolute equality. Will women like to be good gunners, good fighters rather than enjoying nursing, family affairs, home-keeping, and other things.

Ganguli : I must congratulate Dr. Mazumdar for making a very good plea for women's liberation. Before I ask a question, I have a piece of information to give her. This is about child-bearing practices. In different child-bearing practices, between two communal groups—Hindus and Sikhs, primitiveness leading to dependancy was found to be the characteristics of the Hindu women. Whereas primitiveness leading to aggression was found to be a major characteristic of Sikh child-bearing practices.

Amina Bose : So far as the main thesis of Dr. Mazumdar's talk is concerned she is quite right in claiming and asking for equality for women. Not only Manu, not only Tulsi Das but as late as in the 19th century Ramakrishna, the great Saint of Bengal, mentioned *kamaini* and the *kanchan* as the worst enemies of man, and that shows a certain point of view which somehow is ingrained in our culture.

Without going into the merits of Tulsi Das and Manu, I think it would be very wise if we seek, whether or not, are we really going backward instead of progressing. I think no one in his or her senses would deny the fact that there has been a great deal of going backward.

Another point which Dr. Mazumdar has not mentioned, is that alongside women, men are also suffering in the kind of specific training they are given, training in so called men's occupation, carpentry, etc. I have seen it with my own eyes—when they go abroad out of this *sarika anchal* of mother, or wife or whoever, and have to do things for themselves, they are really not only inadequate but become misfit for very simple things that any society should train men in. So, this kind of specified things for women that the Education Commission or the Ministry of Education and NCERT are emphasising also harming men.

Besides, Dr. Mazumdar mentions there is no one uniform pattern in any kind of area in the status and life-style of women, for example, literacy is 53 per cent in Kerala, when it is 8 per cent in Rajasthan, that is one example. I suggest when we are concerned about women and their status in life and life style, we should have to survey more scientifically, including

that of the minority communities, specifically and separately who are probably 2 per cent of the population of 600 million, such as the Parsis and the Anglo-Indians to know whether there is difference because of their values and of less taboos and less emphasis on various aspects of life as to the rest of the population. For example, the question of a girl marrying or remaining single and so on and so forth, should be made out in studies.

If we see that out of the surveys or studies there are some points of incentives with regard to their community, they should be adopted. I think, we miss by not making a study of such incentives or specific features which can serve as models to other communities.

Secondly, these communities might be idea-giver because most of them either introduce certain values endemic to their religion or they belong to reformed religions. These religions have changed communities, as small as 2 per cent of the whole.

Asok Mitra : Dr. Niharrajan Ray in his opening speech made very good points—that in a composite culture there are different qualities and different parts and process of integration has brought together these autonomous units without losing their identity.

If we are building a machinery or a particular structure and one part is considerably weaker than the other part in a structure, then the structure, cannot hold. For instance, men and women are different but they will have to be within a composite and integrated culture. Their strength must be that tensile strength, that ductile strength to hold on a footing of equality or on a par with each other.

The feminine part of the structure of the nation is weakening considerably, so neither the composite character of this national structure, nor the integration part will have much progress, with this continuous weakening—weakening in the case of the original autonomous parts.

The autonomous parts are also fraying—intense greater weakening or strengthening also creates stresses and strains between men and women, and this is quite relevant to the theme of the discussion. I think the basic parts in a nation are men and women, and if they are exhibiting tremendous stresses and strains and signs of falling apart, or not coming to each other in a position of equality, then I think, there is a very great inequality.

Shri Krishna Das : No man is entirely masculine and no woman is entirely feminine. The fact is that we are partly women and partly men. So far as likes and dislikes are concerned, let us leave them to the particular individual, and as Dr. Mazumdar has said, we should not bifurcate just on the point that she is a woman and so she should not be allowed to study that subject. That is wrong. It should be left to the individuals because we find in society women excelling even in those spheres which were once regarded as the men's domain.

Bhatia : I feel whatever has been said seems to be largely related to formal education. Unfortunately, the very concept of education seems to be related to what I call the anarchy of alphabets. Whoever knows the alphabets is educated, and who does not, is illiterate and uneducated. Our system picks on that assumption and then goes on relating the entire education to the economic factors. How useful education can be in the economic conduct of a human being? Occupations are divided. But, I am looking at it barely from the point of view of education and not merely literacy in the alphabets. I feel education is an assimilating experience in the life-style. I find that our women, in the initial stages are far more educated and at least contribute far more to the child's education, not only in terms of informal education but in terms of language and concept of education. School, in fact, obstructs education, retards education in early years of the child. The approach way contributes more to the education. It should take into account not only the formal properties of literacy but also the adaptability of human being to their environments.

Somehow, I think women's education seems to suffer particularly when we view this in isolation and in terms of the formal property of literacy. In that frame work, I think there are again rural and urban biases. In urban, the emphasis on literacy seems to be sharper, whereas in rural other grades get priority. In the case of the working women in the city, the mother may not be much of an educator for it is the servant who most of the time educates children as he is constantly with them.

Education needs to be related not only to the one who is receiving but also to the one who is imparting it in the process. I think, while the rural women continues to maintain the role of educator, the working women in urban areas do not perform the role of an educator, the servant

is becoming more of a teacher in Place of the woman in urban areas in so far as he is imparting a great deal of education to the young children.

Veena Mazumdar : As regards women's education as Dr. Mitra pointed out one of the many reasons why women are losing out in the economic sphere, and in the political sphere, is the fact that there is discrimination in their access to education. The suggestion of relating education to the actual needs, of a particular group, who are to be educated—especially women, has been, (in terms of women's education to their actual needs, in terms of childcare, nutrition, family welfare, sewing, knitting) etc. This is where we have always displayed, middle class bias. Because when it comes to child-care, certainly we can learn a great deal from experts. But is it something, that should only be taught to women? Child-care these days, has become joint responsibility. One of the reason, why children are going out of hand in middle class families is because the entire responsibility is left to the mother. It is not in the mother's ability to handle the kind of problem—adolescence and teenagers experience these days. Most of the middle class mothers who stay within their homes are unable to understand these problems. The argument which the reformers in the 19th century had used to bringing in women's education was the gap that was being widened between husbands and wives, mothers and sons, because the mother was becoming ineffective in exerting any kind of influence on children, the same argument can be applied today because there is a communication gap between different generations and even if we have an educated mother, there is no guarantee that she is able to understand the kind of tensions, the kind of pressures that a middle class child has to experience, particularly during his adolescence. Because it is a world to which she has no access and so cannot understand it.

The other thing that Dr. Bose wanted to know is what sort of measures I would recommend. The first thing is that the economic content of education in this country will have to be revamped. The problem of women's education, and the education of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, is identical. The women who are remaining outside education are remaining not because of attitudes, not because of their reluctance to come forward to be educated, but because of their poverty, and only when the economic content and the employability is introduced into the educated system, that is the only incentive that is going to work with these groups. Then even the men in their families would not object to sending girls for schooling.

The basic reason which we found during our tours around the country for the girl drop-outs from schools among the poorest families, is because these girls have to work either as wage-earners or as helpers so that their mothers can go out to work. We have found thousands and thousands of families in this country where the mother and the sisters are earning so that the boys can be put through school. In the age group of 10-15 about 20 per cent of the boys who are now in school, would not be in school, if their sisters of the same age group were not working along with their mothers to pay for the boy's schooling.

Therefore the question of incentives to improve women's enrolment has always been the professed policy of the Government throughout the country right down the years starting from the time when women's education came into the agenda. The kind of incentives that were thought to them were exclusive schools for girls, women teachers, and special type of curricula that would be more suited to the kind of lives the girls will have to lead when they grow up.

Every one of these incentives was thought of in relation to high castes, upper class families where there was very definite resistance to sending girls for schooling. These incentives have gone on all these times. What we found was as far as the middle class was concerned, incentives were no longer necessary. Education for girls was something that was accepted by the middle class as necessary, if only to make them equipped to deal with their problems later on but at least to get them married because they cannot get them married unless they are educated. So, the middle class incentives are no longer necessary. We were told that co-education was always resisted because the sex segregation is part of our urban culture. When we went round asking questions in the rural areas, we were told : look, we have no objection to co-education; our boys and girls work and play together, there is no sex segregation in our types of families. If we can afford to send them to school, we do not mind sending them to the same school that boys go to. This is a prejudice only among the urban people. It is the middle class urban people who want separate schools for their girls. And yet, in spite of evidence that we brought forward, we have not succeeded in convincing anybody that co-education is not a problem as far as the rural areas are concerned.

There are certain pockets, small communities and this is where I welcome Dr. Bose's intervention that we do need studies and analysis of

how the whole pattern of girls' education is developing in different communities. That there has not been enough analysis, and data is very confusing. We did make an effort, the data could not be interpreted. Obviously, something was wrong with our initial collection of evidence.

Lastly, Dr. Mitra has already explained the extreme relevance of why we are discussing the whole question of women in the context of composite culture. Because one of the things which I mentioned in my paper is that in the whole analysis of the women's question in India-- whether it is in the field of education or in the field of employment or legal rights, we have always been dominated by experience of middle class women; high caste, upper caste, middle class women. The kind of problems which were identified as the basic problem of women and the measures that were designed to deal with these problems were the problems of the minority women.

If we are truly thinking in terms of composite culture, I think, we have a great deal to learn, when it comes to men-women relationships, we have a great deal to learn from the non-middle class sections of our population where there is a relatively higher degree of equality between men and women in roles they perform, in status which they enjoy in their community, the freedom, their ability to face problems and tackle them. The kind of inhibitions that middle class girls grow up with, these kinds of inhibitions are non-existent in many non-middle class sections.

Ganguly : I am just making a distinction between reform and intergration. Would you call the US society with the high literacy and education in women an integrated society. I would still make a difference, let us be semantically clear, at least conceptually clear. I would say there are two different concepts. I am open to conviction but I am still unconvinced. American society is one of the most disintegrated society with a huge set of problems.

Veena Mazumdar : I would totally agree, Sir. But I would also remind you that the concept of women becoming marginalised is a concept which has come from the American women who are not at all integrated. In many ways, we are far better off than they are. But we are developing trends in our society which are going in that direction. American society is the society where women have been reduced to objects and commodities. This is something which we never wanted and this is the direction which our

society is taking. The sex ratio trends, the other trends which Dr. Mitra referred to, are only indicators of this change.

Ganguly : How can you change the sex ratio except by controlling the mortality, and one of the major problems in mortality is the child-bearing risk of the woman and of course poor nutrition. But how can you basically change the sex ratio.

Veena Mazumdar : By arresting the other trend which Dr. Mitra referred to with the employment of women in which we had a far higher percentage than the US in the year 1901 and 1911, where we have dropped. If the economic status of women goes up, things will look-up and change.

Now we should discuss thought-provoking formulations in Mr. Dev Dutt's presentation on "Hindus and Muslims in India : Socio-Economic Relations in a Historical Perspective",

Rasheeduddin Khan : As a matter of fact, when we talk of integration and of the important elements which go into the making of this composite culture we speak of special layers' we speak of several components, and we do not only speak of special horizontal integration, but, we speak of vertical integration which is missing.

For example, when we talk of integration, we must talk of integration, say of Andhra people, Marathi people the Bengali people and the Gujarati people so on and so forth. This phenomenon is because of caste character of our society. Eighty per cent of our people are broadly characterised as Hindus. For purposes of discussion, it would be a very convenient point to say that let us focus attention on the 80 per cent first and talk of the Muslims who constitute about 11.6 per cent later and so also about the Christians, who are 2.6 later.

As a matter of fact all religious minorities, that is Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, constitute not more than 16.8 per cent. Therefore, when we talk of integration or when we talk of welfare, when we talk of peace, when we talk of elections, party politics, we talk of the Hindus. It is another matter altogether as to how we define them.

Therefore, let me first say that the problem of integration is a problem of vertical integration of the Hindu castes, *jatis* and sub-castes. That is one point and another point relates vertical integration of strata groups

and classes. As a matter of fact, there is a community of integration at the horizontal level between the rich classes and lower level classes.

Veena Mazumdar : Fraternity of the destitutes and fraternity of the affluents : Among whom there are no variations ?

Rasheeduddin Khan : Beautifully put : The fraternity of the affluents and the fraternity of the destitutes are there. In between the fraternity of the affluents and the fraternity of the destitutes there are communication links. A rich Muslim and a rich Hindu are perfectly at peace. A rich Muslim and a poor Muslim are not always in peace. A rich Hindu and a poor Hindu are not always in peace. A poor Hindu and a poor Muslim are in peace. Beggar Muslims, beggar Buddhists, beggar Hindus are perfectly at peace because they are all beggars. The definition of the problem is sometimes overdone and the heart is almost artificial, out of all proportion to the requirements on the Hindu-Muslim question.

Nevertheless, we should not overlook the Hindu-Muslim problems, It is an important problem. As a matter of fact, madam, I will submit that I do not consider Muslims to be a minority. Please understand it in the spirit in which I am saying it. I think India is a land of two dominant people—Hindus and Muslims. Numerically, the Hindus are in a majority. Numerically the Muslims are in a hollow minority. But in terms of individual consciousness and group consciousness, Muslims and Hindus have been almost on par.

As a matter of fact, till 1947, Hindus had suffered from minority psychosis. It is a strange phenomenon. The point that you have made is a right point. Coming from the twin city of Hyderabad, Muslim who never constituted more than 90 per cent of the population controlled 85 per cent of all the jobs available. Because of that, they always dominated the whole scene. As a Muslim child, I was conscious that I belonged to the majority dominant community. Education, enlightenment and statistics made me change my unfortunate euphoria. Sometimes, we must also remember that the numerical equations are not the whole relevant equations in history.

It is a fact that partition has, in an irrational manner divided the country on the basis of religious majorities and minorities. What has been a part of British Paramountcy's unfolding, is also the basis of reactionary policies, not only of the Muslim League, but also of the Indian

National Congress. Let it be very clear that partition has been the culmination of some of the under-currents of the Indian National Congress itself, not to speak of the Mahasabha, not to speak of other communalism.

It is unfortunate. I do not know, how people in Pakistan look at it. But from the angle of the Indian people, it has given rise to a feeling among the Hindus that since Muslims asked for their homeland, the homeland has been given. Why the hell are they hanging on here? I cannot bodily lift a poor Muslim from his farm and say, "Go". Where will he go? You can throw him into the Bay of Bengal. You can throw him into hell. But that will be an act of unfairness. On the basis of majority I cannot turn away a son of the soil, whatever he may be, a Muslim or a Hindu. None of us was consulted by the powers that be whether we wanted to be Hindus or Muslims. They never had the volition of offering to become one or the other. If so, if we are talking a language of reason, if we have to take fact, that people have been born out of biological compulsions of their birth, sometimes they have opted out of the compulsions, but if they have not opted, they have every right to be in the religion they want.

In India, problem becomes more complicated because we have a few alternatives and scarcity of resources. The question of discrimination in the matter of jobs comes in, not because anybody would deliberately like to work against Muslims getting in or a Buddhist setting in. Sometimes, it might happen that way also. But it happens because in a competitive society, with a competition that is unequal those who have more education, more amenities, have a larger share in the cake. If you see the statistics, while Muslim constitute 11.6 per cent of the total population, their share in jobs is less than 11.6 per cent. Even in the parliament of India, the people whose names are Muslims like mine, have never been equal to their proportion to the population of India. The same is true of IAS and of IPS.

Veena Mazumdar : What about women? You gave one example, what percentage of the population? What is their proportion of representation?

Rasheeduddin Khan : Happily women do not constitute a religion as such.

Veena Mazumdar : No, No.

Rasheeduddin Khan : No prophet has ever been in a woman's hands. Thank goodness. Therefore the problem of women is another problem. We all hang our heads in shame about that category. But that is another category, because when you talk of women, you talk of Muslim women also.

The point that I am making is not to be confused with two things. In a competitive polity, those who control an inordinately large share of power, of wealth and education, also have access to the inordinately large share of the profits. An impression is that even if they apply, they do not get in. It is a very wrong impression. My information is that by and large, our services' examination is very fair and whenever a good Muslim boy has appeared, he gets in. But there is a certain psychosis. Sometimes we equate all problems of Muslims higher education with Aligarh University. I will dismiss it in two sentences by saying that the total enrolment in Aligarh University is not more than 5000 students, of which 35 per cent is Hindus. Total Muslim students studying in Aligarh is 5000 to 6000 and total proportion of students in the universities and academics of India is 36 lakhs. This 11.6 per cent is the proportion of Muslims in the population and from that proportion it is arguable that there must be at least 3.6 lakhs, Muslim students also. If not 3.6 lakhs, at least 2 lakhs, or 5000 is 2 lakhs. It is such a small number that even if Aligarh is declared wholly Islamic university, problem is still not solved. It is a problem of Muslims in Orissa; it is a problem of Muslims in Malabar, it is a problem of Muslims in Assam. It is a problem of all-India scale. The requirement is that we must treat the problem of Muslims as a national problem as such as the problem of Hindus or Sikhs.

Politicalisation of Islam in India is a direct consequence of British colonial policy. That Hindus and Muslims are different in terms of religion is well known but that necessarily they must differ in politics is not well known. The fact of the matter is that communal Hindus and communal Muslims have always met. The logic of communalism is that communal leaders always meet. All that they can say : *Sab Hindu bhai hain ; main Muslim bhai hun ; or Hindu Bhai Muslim Bhai sath rahen*. In India, I would like adjectives, Hindus and Muslims to go. Why do you say you are a *Hindu Bhai* or a *Muslim Bhai*. You say '*sab bhai hain*'. To say *bhai* is quite enough. The time when we talk of each other as *bhais* will be the time when the secular articulation will be stressed.

These are some of the stray thoughts I have mentioned to stimulate discussion on the paper of Mr. Dev Dutt.

K.K. Mittal : I feel, if while reviewing Hindu-Muslim relations, as Dev Dutt has suggested, we do not apply the parametres of liberal or Marxian analytical frame work, we will be better appreciating the relations between different religious groups. We should discard generalisations and avoid labels while doing serious analysis, as is apparent from some of the examples, which Mr. Dev Dutt has furnished. There are built-in contradictions : sometimes a particular political party appears secular, while at the other time it appears to follow communal approach. For example, Congress is wedded to the principle of secularism, yet it has taken advantage of communal situation or factor.

Similarly, other groups or individuals take advantage of communalism if it serves their interests. So long, this consideration prevails, and we go on making use of communal factor to further our interest, secularism will not make much headway. Even the so called secularists make use of this handy tool for their vested interests.

Shri Krishna Das : My submission is that people who are really religious, whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or of any religion or sect, do not create problems. All those who indulge in creating problems are persons who make use of their religious positions and fan the fire of communal hatred to serve their vested interests, ulterior motives, even their designs.

K.K. Mittal : I think, it is a selfishness on the part of individuals or a group which fosters communalism and balks the process of national integration. It is not the people who are divided or fanatics. But the fault lies with the leaders who divide people and play one community against another to preserve their position or serve their interests.

Shri Krishna Dass : One more point I will like to make, and that is, we should cull out the "very best" of the best literature, be it Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Kanar, for every one thinks his is the best, and present it to the people. The same practice can be adopted so far as the religious teachings are concerned. We should incorporate the best expression and the popular words of different languages and adopt a common script, and that can be our link language. Call it by the name, *Nagi*, *Bharati*, or

whatever name you want to give. It may even have a few foreign words which everyone including the villagers understand.

Veena Mazumdar : I think this is the most concrete suggestion. It is something which appeals to me. In one of the totally non-elitist customs in my part of the country is a marriage custom—just after the wedding the bride and the bridegroom, both in the presence of a big group make a sort of commitment as to what is the policy they are going to follow towards each other for the rest of their lives, and which comes to. “I will always try to hide the other person’s faults and only proclaim his/her virtues”. And what my colleague has advocated as the first step towards arriving at some form of composite culture, I think it is very much in the same line.

I would like to go back to some of the negatives stated in Mr. Dutta’s Paper as approaches which have proved inadequate in arriving at a true understanding of the various communal issues or questions on the basis of discussion that has taken place, we have to add further negatives to it—one is as pointed out by Rasheeduddin Khan—that it is not just a mistake, it is fanatically unrealistic to think about any community—Hindus or Muslims or a particular caste or group of any kind including the women as a homogeneous category. It is just non-existent in this country. It is too complex a society.

The horizontal division are far more effective than even vertical ones, which are real. The horizontal divisions sometimes cut across the vertical divisions. As he said, in the fraternity of the destitute and faternity of the affluent, all the vertical divisions tend to disappear. So, that is one other complication which has to be listed that no simplistic approach to the understanding of this problem is going to get us anywhere.

The other negative is that we are not going to help evolve creation of a composite culture by always defining the differences. It is much better to understand the similarities first as the similarities are many. Unfortunately, a few of our social historians, and our social scientists, and particularly the political commentators—whether they were people who wanted to unite or whether they were people who wanted to divide—I think they have all been equally guilty of this crime that instead of trying to emphasise the similarities amongst the various cultures, they have tended to emphasise the differences.

The emphasis on differences is already there, very much—there is differences of languages, local prejudices, communal prejudices, ways are

expression, particular terms used in talking about people belonging to other groups. Therefore some kinds of deliberate attempt is necessary to explain the implications of these differential terminologies at times. Very often these are used very innocently without understainging what their implications are, the expressions that we learnt from childhood, from friends, and we go on using them. In the process some kind of psychosis is built around these terms.

I think another point that has been suggested by Mr. Dev Dutt is that at the non-political level—these tensions, these conflicts were never very predominant. But the political colouring of issues, particularly the question of Hindu-Muslim tension, as Rasheedudin Khan brought out, the politicisation of these issues by a deliberate policy on the part of the erstwhile rulers, has been one of the biggest tragedies. Unless we can get out of looking at these problems always from the political angle, it is very difficult to arrive at a proper understanding.

S. C. Mishra : For proper evaluation of the growth of the Composite Culture, it is necessary that we discuss some of the aspects of mediaval society and the influence of Islam on indigenous culture and the rise of an urban class and its role. For nearly 300 years, upto the age of Akbar, there was a conflict beetwen Turks and the Rajputs which has been interpreted on religious lines, as a confrontation between the two—Hindus and the Muslims which in fact was a confrontation between the two ruling clases—the Rajputs and the Turks and their allies, primarily for the possession of land and supermecy of power. The Turkish influence spread in course of time over the whole of Northen India including Deccan. The 15th Century, gave birth to an urban Muslim socieiy. As the towns were controlled by the invading, Turks and as they went on to secure allies the towns became religions centres inhabited by the Muslims. The result was the emergence of an upper class Muslim society in India with shifts into certain facets of cultural and social development. Consequent to the tremendous amount of conflict primarily between the two ruling classes, the dominant Rajput elements were eliminated from most of the Indo-Gengetic plain. But they were eliminated only from the towns, not from the villages. Throughout the Mughal period and after, the *Zamindars* continued to dominate the villages and the *Zamindars* were largely Indians. In Gujarat, for example, we find tnat it is only in the 17th century that the *zamiadars* were touched to a significant extent by the ruling power.

My submission here is that given this insularity which primarily is the characteristic of the agrarian economy and its limited communication system, the earlier existent regional culture and language also provided a basis for this development. The Muslims thus formed an upper class along with the Rajputs, the Hindu upper class. In this given situation they developed certain common norms of living, achieved an understanding, and a basis for ideological framework in the age of Akbar, when with his semi religious formulation of *Sulah-i-kul* policy he tried to achieve a kind of synthesis between the cultures of Hindus and the Muslims, some kind of centrism between the communities. The urban all India upper class culture was largely pan-Hindi in its spirit. The upper classes were also highly influenced by the Mughal culture, as they were the agents of the Mughal administrative system and its mains beneficiaries. As this culture spread, there also came into being a different kind of ancillary development, namely the Muslim ruling classes began to shape regional centres. These upper classes of the Muslims accepted certain modes, certain belief-patterns, certain social norms which were largely characteristic of that particular region. Actually, it was a kind of timely requirement which these classes faced. The impact of this interaction was such that the agrarian and land-owning Muslim classes deny daughters any share in the paternal property. Here what seems to me is Indianisation of the ruling Muslim elite. Thus, a Saiyid, or an Afghan, or a Mughal who settled in Gujrarat, may have certain features which are common with those in Bengal but then, there would be certain other areas in which he would be closer to the Rajputs, the upper class in Gujarat. This created the basis for the evolution of a cultural pattern, the most beautiful example of which, is the Urdu language.

Simultaneously, we find that large numbers of conversions also took place. The details of these conversions and those of belief-patterns, the ethos, the memorials of this converted class, are more easy to trace than the kind of change which took place in the upper classes. One has only to read the ethnographic literature which was compiled in the 19th century to see how close these were to the culture and the belief-pattern of the society of the region where conversions took place. One of the burdens which I want to emphasise is that the slow pattern of the concept of integration emerged in the context of understanding there by reconciling the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindus and the Muslims have been seen as two systems opposing each other which is a falasy. If one looks at the

medieval culture and medieval ethos, there was a great distinction and distance between a Mutlim noble and a Muslim labourer than between a Muslim noble and Rajput noble. The composite culture which emerged was essentially the creation of this upper class where the distinction between the Hindu and the Muslim was not very important. It was definitely, as Dr. Vatsayan pointed out, a kind of high culture, which filtered down in some lower form.

Given this, the medieval dichotomy is not primarily as one between the Hindu and the Muslim but as one between the rich and the poor, which has a bearing on the integration problem. Of course, there has to be a period of transition. Yet, total integration is not possible because an agricultural society by nature is a class society.

Integration, however, is possible by a continuous process of economic development with simultaneous input of education and conscious efforts to promote non-cultural and non-religious entities as the ideal of secularism.

Kapila Vatsayaayn : While Prof. Mishra presents one picture of medieval India, there is another too. Until the 10th century there was a sort of unity of language after which decandence set in. Decandence of Sanskrit led to the decandence of regional languages. From whatever available material I have been looking at, the picture that emerges is of a cohesive India at a cultural level, and what we call political or economic levels there was, either fragmentation, or coming together of a central power. And it is not just the North, but the deep South also, that the movements that emerged in one part of India have gone into every part. And it is not true for just two or threetimes but of many times. This pattern must have been determined by some factor or factors. What those factors are, I think, need to be gone into. This is a staggering picture of a culture which has been constantly in dialogue with different regions of India, different kinds of people, irrespective of their political, economic and religious status. For example, Roop Goswami was originally a Muslim who evolved theological basis of *Chaitanya Gauria*.

S. C. Misra : Where movement or cultural diffusion is concerned, probably, I will accept it. But the point which bothers me is two-fold. First, if we take Vedic culture of the upper classes' areas, how deep is its

influence on the life of the poorer classes of India ? For example, in the peasant classes 80 percent have provisions for divorce and multiple marriages, which is absolutely a taboo to the upper class Hindu. Take Dr. Roy Burman's history of the *Balwara* region in the Mughal period, we find that organisation of tribes takes place by the induction of the upper classes system. But then how deep do these practices go ? How deeply do they influence the life and manners of the people in a particular region ? To me it seems that there is a clear dichotomy at that level. There have been organisational elements. There are mother goddesses and shivas which have penetrated. But what about the social practices ? What about the ways of behaviour—*purdah* for example ? I would agree that religious movements were also social movements. This is what I have said that in the emergence of the upper class Mughal culture, the Hindu and Muslim identities get blurred, but this does not mean that they are absolutely one or totally integrated.

Kapoor : Reverting back to the subject of inequality between the Sexes, as a doctor, I wish to add a couple of points which should cause a great deal of concern among all those who stand for equality between the sexes. Unfortunately, it has a direct bearing on my profession. There is a sudden upsurge of hymenoplasty, surgical operation to reconstruct ruptured hymens (membranes covering part of the vaginal opening in young women. The patients are unmarried women in their early and mid-twenties from affluent sections of society. Apparently most of them undergo the operation under pressure from their parents who wish their daughters to be regarded as virgins. The operation is itself relatively brief and usually performed under local anaesthesia. The high fees are the price for secrecy. But what makes the whole practise unethical is the surgeon's acquiescence in the perpetuation of unhealthy social norms which codify the Indian male's insistence on the virginity of his bride, without a similar demand being placed on his own moral conduct. They involve the women's internalisation of male chauvinist beliefs. They are based on obscuring the elementary fact that the hymen is not necessarily ruptured by sexual intercourse alone, but also—and very frequently—on account of vigorous physical activity.

The fact that the practise of hymenoplasty is growing bears testimony to the strength of the more vulgar and preverse varieties of male chauvinist attitudes in our society. It is unfortunate that modern medical techniques can now be used to buttress outdated ideas and customs.

Another instance of this is the growing resort among women to amniocentesis, a technique that can be used to determine the sex of the foetus. More often than not, the test is done, at enormous risk to the women and the foetus, in order to decide whether to abort the child if it is female. This is thus a form of female (foetal) infanticide. And yet many doctors have had no compunction in recommending the technique without even warning the patient of the grave danger involved. This raises the question of medical ethics. Should doctors regard themselves as mere, "neutral" mercenaries, or should they take a stand against regressive moral values? The question will not be soved by state fiat; medical praititioners must themselves refuse to support sexist notions and practices.

Karan Singh : All cultures, by definition are composite. I do not know, it might be a semantic problem. Culture by its very nature is so pluralistic and multi-dimensional that in one sense of the term, at least all culture, is necessarily composite. And that human civilisation, as we know it now, emerged from the earlier phases of conscioness. There was a certain pooling together of human resources for any sort of cultural efflorescence which could become possible, with a certain momentum which, perhaps was required.

But I am aware of the fact that India has got a very special background of the composite nature of its culture, and I think of all the great world civilizations, one factor that does mark Indian civilisation off from the rest, is the tremendous cultural continuity. If you study the great cultures that arose at the same time—the Greeks or the Egyptians, the Babylonians, etc, roughly about 5,000 B.C., you will find that hardly anyone of them now exist. They have all broken, and although you may find *ruins* and you may find learned books about them, there is not any sense of cultural continuity. For example, it was very interesting, when I went to Greece, and I was looking for Apollo, because Apollo was par excellence, the patron god of the Greeks, the God of life and consciousness and power. I went to Delphi, I went to Athens. I asked some people on the road : "Do you know where Apollo was," and they looked at me as if I was mad or some kind of a nut. Whereas if you come to India and you look for *Surya*, or you look for a concept of that nature, it is still alive.

How do these concepts get their vitality ? They get their vitality from the continuing relevance of a particular concept to a civilization. It is very clear. After my visit to Greece, it became quite clear to me that

Apollo was dead. But in India you would still find a living sense of an awareness of these great concepts. I think that is a distinguishing feature of the Indian civilization and the main key to this has been this very great capacity for cultural assimilation that has been mentioned so frequently. It was the vedic dictum : आनो भद्रा—कृत्वो यन्त विश्वतः Let noble thoughts come to us. Let us assimilate it. And the whole multifaceted, many multi-dimensional panorama of Indian History can from one point of view be looked upon as constant assimilation of incursions, starting with the earliest record of the impact of the Aryan advent on the ancient civilization. Although even there, the point that I think Roy Burman would certainly make that the tribal civilisation in India far pre-dated even the Dravidian civilisation.

What was the impact between the tribal civilization and the Mohanjadaro, assuming that Mohanjadaro was a Dravidian civilization ? That is lost to us. We know little about it. But it is clear that Hinduism that developed before 3 to 4000 years ago, was the result of this extraordinary cultural fusion, as it were, of three strands—the Vedic religion of the Aryans, of the existing religion or the civilization that was there, and of the tribal mother-Goddess, the Naga— if you like, using the word Naga in very broadest sense of the term that existed. This third strand very often has not been given adequate attention by our scholars. We talk only of the Aryan, the Dravidian but not so much of the tribal strand. The first two can be compared with *Ganga* and *Yamuna* and the third one with *Saraswati*. It might have been invisible, but nevertheless it was there. I think that this is a point which needs a little more consideration by anthropologists and sociologists and scholars as to what has been the input of the pre-Dravidian civilization in India into the making of modern India. This is just one point I would like to make.

The second thing, coming to very much more recent period, the latest example of India's capacity for cultural assimilation, of course, what is known, for want of a better term, is the Indian renaissance, from Raja Rammohan Roy onwards. There, if one studies the social reform movements with which this whole process began, it seems to me clear, at least from what little I have seen, that the Christianity and the Missionaries played a very important part in the development of the Hindu social reformers. Whether it was *Brahmo Samaj* of Raja Rammohan Roy, or the *Arya Brahmo Samaj* of Rabindra Nath Tagore, or the *Brahmo Samaj* of Kesab Shandra Sen, or the *Prarthna Samaj* of Bhandarkar and Ranade

of Maharashtra, or even the *Arya Samaj* of Swami Dayananda. I think all of these were to a considerable extent triggered off by the impact of Christian missionaries. When you talk of composite culture, these are the strands which may not be very predominant in our thinking at present, but which I think, played a very important catalytic role in the development of modern Indian Culture.

The third point, of course, is the very popular problem of the Islam-Hindi contacts on the sub-continent, what actually emerged from them and what was their cultural synthesis at any given time? If so, why was it not strong enough to withstand the forces that led to the partition? That, of course, is a vast question. Sometimes, it seems to me that the partition of India became inevitable when Aurangzeb defeated Dara Shikoh. That is one way of looking at it. Because had that not happened, had the assimilative forces of that time been able to assert their predominance, perhaps the entire history of India would have been different. But that is just a somewhat dramatic formulation of a point which needs a great deal of further work.

However, one remark that I would like to make in this regard is that in Kashmir, perhaps, Islam and Hinduism came to their closest form of cultural symbiosis, if you like, or—cultural integration. Because in Islam, it was largely the *Sufi* movement which was much more conducive to assimilation or adaptation with the Hindu ethos than more traditional aspects of Islam, and the *Sufi* impact and the *Shaiva* development in Kashmir with Laleshwari and Shah-e-Madan the two key figures in this extraordinary drama of religious life and development, played vital roles. The Kashmir *Shaivism* reached its apex in the great Yogan Laleshwari, and the *Sufi* impact came with the coming of Shah-e-Madan and his 700 followers from Persia. It was in Kashmir, in fact, which has been a crucible in that way of a number of interesting experiments, and today, if you go to Kashmir, you will find the impact of a number of things. Even the Buddhist impact which has disappeared largely from the rest of India is still visible in the Kashmir context. Then you have the Vedic impact, then you have the Kashmir *Shaivism*, and then you have the *Sufi* impact, you have various other strands. Subsequently the Sikhs and then the Dogras, the Hindu revival and so on. So it is a very interesting case to study. These are just a few general remarks, some what disjointed, but I thought that in the broader context of what we call our composite culture, perhaps these are the points which at some subsequent date could become the subject of study in depth.

I will come now to some points on secularism which may be relevant in this context. It should be quite clear what secularism means and what it is not. Secularism is not, as has been repeated very often, a rejection of religion, but it is simply, as I understand it in the Indian context, a policy whereby the State as such does not favour any particular religion. But even if we take that definition of secularism, it seems to me that there are three possible approaches to secularism, all three of which are in evidence to a lesser or greater degree.

The first is the approach of those people who do not believe in religion, for whom all religion, whatever religion it may be, is just the same kind of a superstition that has come down from the dark ages. It is an anachronism. It is a sort of a childish phase of human thought which has to be transcended. Therefore, there is no real feeling for the religion. This is one approach to secularism. If all religions are equally absurd, then, of course, it is very simple to take the view that we should be secular and then there is no question of a choice. That is one aspect. It is expressed by some people, although 99.9 percent—Ashok Mitra was the Census Commissioner, he will correct me if I am wrong—if I may say, 99.9 percent of Indians when interviewed in the 1971 Census did say that they believed in one or the other form of the various religions. So, if this first view, what I may call the atheistic view of secularism is there, it is evidently confined to a very small number of people. But nonetheless it is a view which does deserve a certain amount of consideration. The second view, which is very much more widespread is, what one might call for want of a better term, perhaps the utilitarian approach to secularism. In other words, the Hindus might feel, it would have been marvellous if this whole country might have been Hindu. But because the Muslims are there, what are we going to do with them. We cannot wish them away—*Chalo Bhai kuch na kuch adjustment kar lo*. (Let us make some sort of adjustment) If it had been *Dehro-o-haram*, if the whole of India had been Muslim, it would have been marvellous. It would have been another Muslim state. But what can we do, these Hindus are persisting for centuries. Therefore, we have got to accept secularism. This I think, the broadest, the most popular view of secularism. Utilitarianism has all sorts of religions. There is really no alternative but to be secular, otherwise you will have riots and problems, etc. Therefore, let us accept secularism.

So the first is, what I would call, the atheistic approach to secularism, without using the word atheistic in any derogatory sense, just in a

technical sense. The second is that just as rivers from different parts of the country, finally flow into the same ocean, so do all religions and sects. Their points of origin may be different, but ultimately they all lead to the same end. I would submit that if this approach is there, it is a tremendous advantage, as in this approach secularism becomes not merely utilitarian or a useful concept, it becomes something very much deeper. One may feel that the religious impulse, particularly in a nation like India is a very very strong tangible force with which all anthropologists and sociologists and political scientists have got to come to terms. Rightly or wrongly, I think that the people of India are a deeply religious people and the religious concept, the idea that there is some meaning to human life beyond earthly materialistic idea, that there is perhaps something within the human personality which in some way or other is not clearly understood or defined, does proceed on a pilgrimage as it were.

These concepts are very valid and one of the difficulties is that we have not really translated these concepts into a workable and viable theory of secularism. I am just very broadly touching on these points, because I am aware that they would require a much more thorough study. I think, therefore, if this approach to secularism could become more widespread and more eloquently defined, perhaps it might help considerably, in the process of national integration.

Turning to national integration, I feel that India is probably better integrated than even many of the developed countries. For example, if one of the parameters by which you measure national integration is the quality and strength of secessionist movements, I think we are better integrated than Canada. I am quite sure that the French movement in Canada is far stronger and far more strongly based than any secessionist movements on the peripheries of India. Even in U. K. for that matter, the extraordinary events that are taking place in Ireland or even in Scotland, I don't think that they are concerned with merely economic development, that once economic development takes place then all these matters would be brushed aside and no one would really worry any longer.

I am afraid, the human psyche is very much more *complex* and very much more multi-faceted than people have realised, although there is a great deal of truth and strength in the theory of economic determinism. I am afraid, it hardly touches the fringe of the human psyche, of the prob-

lems that are deep there within the collective unconsciousness of the human race. This has been proved time and again. You have countries where you have broken the economic barrier, where there is no question of poverty, where there is no lack of food or anything, and still you find irrational forces breaking rules with even greater virulence than they do in the underdeveloped nations? You still find the so-called chauvanistic divisive forces appearing there. Where do they come from? If all these forces were only reflections of economic undevelopment, it would then mean logically that once economic development has taken place, then these forces would disappear. They haven't disappeared. I am not arguing backwards and saying that economic development is not important or necessary. That would be absurd. I am simply submitting that the problems of national integration ultimately resolve themselves into deep problems of human consciousness and human identity, and until such time as the human psyche remains fractured and fragmented until that time, there is no simple and glib solutions to these problems. Therefore, I feel that the extraordinarily colourful and multi-facetedly variegated cultural background of India is our surest guarantee of national integration. It is not a danger to national integration. It is the only guarantee of national integration, because it allows in its very diversity, in its very florese-cence, play for these deep feelings within the human consciousness and psyche which otherwise in a more uniform, in a more unidimensional society, get bottled up, and finally explode in a terrible orgy of destruction.

Raghubir Singh : Secularism means that there should be no dominance of religion on the State. In the encyclopaedia the beginning and history of the secular movement is given as a reaction to the dominance of religion on the State which was rejected. It subsequently developed into something like rejection of religion. But that will not stand in the case of India.

Karan Singh : When I say what secularism was and what it was not, it is true, of course, as Sardar Saheb has said that in the West the concept of secularism grew from the conflict between the Church and the State. But that is why I said, it was a semantic problem. Our secularism is somewhat different in its genesis. There was never that particular type of conflict. Our secularism, I think, developed as a result of the compulsions of the situation within our country. But nonetheless, I think his point is valid that there should be no State religion, that there should be a differentiation between the State as such and religion. It is a problem of semantics. I did not deliberately use the word spiritualism,

because it means different things to different people. But, if I were to comment, I would say that the real meeting point between religions ultimately comes in what may be called the mystical consciousness, which takes us off into a different dimension. If you study the mystical consciousness of the *Sufi*, of the Christian studies, of *Sikh Gurus* or the *Hindu seers*, or of any religion, you will find that they all ultimately, at a certain stage, reach what can only be described a similar type of consciousness. I think it is in the mystical consciousness where the seeds ultimately of the unity of religions lie.

Of course, you cannot expect people to get to that state before they accept secularism. Therefore even before that, some intellectual form of secularism is necessary. Ultimately, as it were, the proof behind it, or the guarantee behind it, would be this spiritualism, or perhaps better, which could be termed as the mystical consciousness.

Raghubir Singh : Or spiritualisation of matter.

Karan Singh : Yes.

Rasheeduddin Khan : I would like to make a brief comment on the subject of secularism to which Dr. Karan Singh made a valid reference. Because, when you talk of the area of composite culture, or when we talk of integration as a fulfilment, it would certainly bring in the concept of secularism. My own feeling is that the development of contemporary policy in the erstwhile colonial countries which are struggling for an identity, acquires relevance when they are committed to some conceptual goals of which secularism is one. Therefore, it is important that we should be clear as to what is the content of the concept we speak about. My feeling is that in India, the concept of secularism has undergone a mutation pattern and change according to pre-sense of values, of system of ideological mutation and so on. It is a fact that several interpretations can be given to the concept of secularism. I can look at it from the historical concept and compare it and contrast it with the experience in Western Europe. It is readily agreed that in Europe the concept began with the separation of the dominance of the Church over spheres which was not of Church. Render Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. But in India, because I do not recognise Hinduism as a body and Church, therefore, the question of separation does not arise. We only separate that which is identifiable. That which is not identifiable cannot be separated either. The question of separation is a question of dissection

which becomes a surgical operation of the most intricate order. Therefore, in India, it is not a problem of horizontal separation of so-called Church from a well-known, well defined territorial policy. It is actually a vertical equation. In India, secularism is an assertion of a true identity and this identity is based not on recognition of equalitybut on a moral level, at an appointed level, which is well taken probably at a level of political education. But I fear that *Karma Dharma* or the *Samabhava* concept, if pushed further, means recognition of equal rights of all belief patterns leading upto a cheerful existence of multiple structures of obscurantism and superstition. If I may put it more simply singular communalism is bad, but if you recite the Qoran and the *Dhampada* and the psalms of David and the psalms of *Vedas* at the same time then it becomes a great achievement of national merit. I have got a great fear that complex communalism sometimes starts off as the very epitome of secular identity.

What is the element of secularism ? In definitional term you always speak of the ideal. No definition speaks of maintaining an ideal. Therefore when you speak of secularism, you speak of an ideal. The ideal is to identify a person from a relegation of religion from group identity to individual identity. It is a fact that even in the Soviet Union one will not be able to completely make people free from obscurantism. I was told the other day by Madam Gromyko that among the things she did in India was to go to a Church. She prayed and she went to a female orthodox church, whose passages are similar to the Prussian orthodox Church. Then why was it that the distinguished Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, a member of the Politbureau of the CPSU, one of the votarys of the Marxist-Lenin concept does so ? It is an individual act. Therefore, the first concept of secularism is the relegation of religion straight from a belief-pattern to individual belief. Second, dominance of civil laws made and modified by man over the old law; third rationalism; doubt and not certainty, charisma and not dogma. Fourth, scientific temper and enquiry; enquiring into the very roots of the culture and process of rejection, because a process of integration is also a process of selection and rejection. Therefore, elimination of belief-pattern, based not an enquiry but on dogma. Fifth, equality of status and opportunity of all on an accepted basis.

Sixth, fraternity of citizens as citizens and not members of the primary group. This sixth factor seems to me as an important element of the working of what we call federalism.

Lastly, I would say that the approach has been very sentimental. It looks very sentimental to speak of *Hindu-bhai*, *Sikh-bhai*, *Muslim-bhai*. Nobody talks of *Bhai*. The emphasis is on *Hindu-bhai*, *Sikh-bhai*, *Muslim-bhai*. This approach is an approach to win an electoral battle. It is an approach to build a political edifice. I would strongly urge that the vitalization of the Indian polity should come first. Somebody speaks of the saints. I think saints have done more damage to Indian politics.

K. K. Mittal : Religion by and large is not a group affair but an individual's own coming face to face with some sort of reality, may be God, or may be his own self-realisation or some such sort of thing. Even though there is a provision for congregation in mosques among the Muslims, yet the Muslims by and large in India do seem to consider religion to be a private affair in a manner similar to the Hindus. That idea perhaps would have been much more important from the point of view of secularism than say, referring to *Sarva Dharma Sambhav* idea, because that does not come as easily to the Muslims as it does to the Hindus. As Prof. Khan observes, we talk of *Muslim-bhai*, *Sikh-bhai* etc but not of *Bhai*. At the grass roots level in the villages or even in towns people do live as neighbours but for political purposes only the "set" language is useful.

I would give you a very concrete example. Once I went to an interior village of Bihar in Santhal Paraganna. There I talked to a Muslim gentleman for about two hours. He was having the same type of dress as others were having, a *dhoti* and *kurta*. He was talking almost in the same language as his Hindu brothers were talking. Only when I came to know his name then I could know that he was Muslim. But in that very Santhal Paragan there is a small town called Goda. There I met a *Mullaji*. He could talk only in Persianised Urdu and he had a different type of dress. Similar is the case with the Hindus in the towns and cities because they are more politically group conscious and identity conscious than the simple folk. So it is when religion—for that matter—or any other group identity is used for some ulterior purposes then problems arise. Most of the time we find that people fight after drinking but when they are deeply religious they do not fight. *Mandirs* and *Masjids* make you deeply religious but *Mundirs* and *Masjids* are also used and utilised for some ulterior purposes and motives by political parties, political groups, and it is they that make fight. It is not *Mandirs* and *Masjids*, it is not religion. Perhaps, the mystical consciousness or religious consciousness is something which might make us *bhai bhai* or be together, as it is something other than ulterior purpose.

Sheela Moban : Society should be built upon the ethical teachings of religions, e.g. Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity *et al*. The rituals and dogma should be discarded.

Karan Singh : I would just like to comment on one or two points of Prof. Khan's remarks about Mrs. Gromyko. It reminds me of my visit to the Soviet Union in 1959. I was particularly interested to study religion in the Soviet Union. I happened to be there on Easter night and we went to the Helopsky Cathedral, that, as you know, is the largest Cathedral of the Orthodox Church and the Patriarch Alexe was performing the Easter mass at midnight. The Cathedral was absolutely packed to capacity. I was looking around, and there were women with tears streaming from their eyes and a very very engrossing Mass took place.

I went the next day to Zakhos, which is a Seminary about 35 miles from Moscow, where they still train people for religious life. It was a very interesting experience. The next day, Mr. Khurushev, whose guests we were, gave us lunch at the Kremlin. Mr. Gromyko and Mrs. Gromyko also happened to be there. I asked Mr. Khrushchev, "Mr. Chairman, Is it possible for a person both to be a communist and a believer ? Because I have witnessed very impressive scenes of devotion in your country and I am very impressed". He replied : "Look, it is not possible for a person in our country to be both a communist and a believer because atheism is an essential and irreducible pre-requisite for communism. However, everybody is not a member of the communist party, and those citizens who wish to practice religion, we allow them to do so." "That is an interesting comment, I think, So whether Mrs. Gromyko is a member of the Communist party, or not, I presume from what you say that she is not, I said."

It is true that Christianity and Islam are both proselytising religions, and therefore, some people feel that there is an irreducible barrier between the sematic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the Eastern religions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. But I think, there again, the Christian mystics and the Sufis provide the key to the break-through in the apparent monolithic structures of these proselytising religions.

Prof. Khan also said, doubt and not certainty must be our approach. I am afraid, I find that difficult to agree with. I appreciate that doubt is an essential stage on the path towards certainty. But to make doubt

an end in itself, to my mind, would be a defeatist attitude. I think, passing through the tumultuous sphere of doubt, ultimately one must emerge into the stratosphere of certainty. It is only when you can say with the mystic, Mansur for example *Anal Huq*, or with the Vedic seer, "I know what Great Being" is who shines effulgent like the sun in the other sphere beyond the dark. Ultimately, I think the certitude is our goal. Doubt is certainly our lot on the path and we believe that the path may last for many centuries. But ultimately, I think we have got to have some certainty as our goal.

Asok Mitra : If I were present at that luncheon of Mrs. Gromyko, I would have congratulated Mrs. Gromyko on a very imaginative political gimmick which put both Rasheeduddin Khan and A.B. Vajpayee with very good humour and enabled Mr. Gromyko to go ahead with an agreement. That is all I would say about it. Coming to tribe, a very important point which Prof. Niharranjan Ray made yesterday was that the word 'tribe' is probably of very recent origin in India and is used for people of a very under developed technology who are sought to be content with that technology and make-do within that technology. I think Prof. Bhatia's point was, whether the attitude of the Indian Polity today towards the Indian tribe and its economy was not the kind of attitude which the British had towards India in the beginning of the 19th Century with their superior technology on an inferior technology ?

As we know, throughout the 19th century, the Indian people made various kinds of troubles and compromises with the British who also tried to contain each political or economic movement within a certain frame. I am afraid that we are neither tackling the problem of technology for the tribal nor tackling the problem of assimilation. The tribals themselves do not have the sophistication of the new knowledge acquired by Indians from the days of Raja Rammohan Roy. As a result, it is a perpetually losing game in which tribal is being puzzled. The tribal now has his inferior technology and does not know the answer and the rest of the Indian people would not provide the whole answer and go out to him to transform and improve his technology. The answer does not lie in the piece-meal kind of proposal that Dr. Roy Burman has made in his prescription. I think his whole point is that the entire field of technology of the tribals vis-a-vis the Indian population or the developed portion of the Indian population is the counterpart of the British administration, of self hierarchy in India of the colonial regime. It needs re-adjustments,

re-examination and a certain attitude of collaboration which is still lacking.

S. C. Sinha : Dr. Karan Singh has suggested genuine positive approach to secularism, through immersion into some kind of universal religion. He has given the example of *Sufism* and so on. To this Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan, like a modern social and political scientist, influenced of course by the modern concepts of sociology about the structural functional requisites of modern man, has mentioned a few points on which there is general agreement in the social sciences, mainly western—very largely American social sciences—as to what are the properties of the modern man and of modern society, namely, dominance of civil law, relegation of religion to individual acts, rationalism, scientific temper, equality of status, the concept of citizenship rather than loyalty to the primordial group and so on and so forth.

We have learned to live with a far more complex and wider spectrum of political and social reality. Under that situation, we are suddenly once again, faced with the human reality that industrialisation, in the way it has developed not only in the West but also in the non-Western modern countries, is bringing in problems of alienation, identity and so on, in response to which, all over the world, there is an awakening for retrieving the primordial, not at the cost of the modern. It is a genuine problem, it cannot be explained away by the theory of conspiracy, because that is a very new theory in terms of which we try to explain away any phenomenon which we cannot handle in terms of a systematic close probing. It so happens that in the experience of the homosapiens in the last two or three decades, we have suddenly become very conscious that we are unable to handle some of the basic requirements, basic biological requirements of man in terms of a very conventional conception of modernity. In other words, we are forced to have a more complex and deeper understanding of the realities that face the species. This we are understanding as academicians; nations are understanding at various levels, and I think there is no escape from retracing or going back into the human experiences as have been revealed on the basis of close studies of situations. It brings us back to the need for a proper understanding of the nature of the human reality. On certain issues, there are some extraordinary things which happened in this nation very recently, which I think, caught many of our pundits unprepared, mainly because we were very much away from the facts on the ground.

We have to look into the human world in the countryside, in the various kinds of urban clusters and learn, how, as Dr. Misra pointed out the classes, ethnic groups of various kinds, of categories deal with the human situations.

One of the points that has been made very forcibly is that we have to live in the modern world, a world of science and technology. There is nothing inherently bad about science and technology. Yet man does not live by science and technology. Here we have to learn a lot from the tribals. For example, in the village where I stay, Shantiniketan, there are people at the same level of poverty—the Bowri and the Santhal. The Santhal's capacity to preserve society and culture, to create aesthetic forms, to have a far greater sense of equality than all of us combined can really guide us in terms of our day to day behaviour. How do they manage to construct society and culture which apparently modern man needs? That needs a proper study. What is a proper study of mankind in the human situation in India? We have to do our homework on the ground with as little preconception as possible. I wouldn't say we go with an empty head but let us not clutter our heads with ideas which do not reach us to the situation. Granting all this, we have to be aware that there are many unresolved issues in our society, if we have to start with a working definition of the modern world. If the working definition of the modern world is an egalitarian society, then how do we bring about egalitarian situation within the control of all the components of the Indian population? About the tribes, Roy Burman, has pointed out that the tribes did participate in their own way, in certain kinds of rebellions which were not just ethnic rebellions. They were rebellions which were at a scale somewhat higher than the ethnic ones. But our national leaders, historians, intelligentsia have neither taken proper note of those nor of their other considerable capacities.

Rabindra Nath Tagore used to say that he did not care much about the nation. He was a citizen of a civilization and for becoming a proper citizen of the civilization he trained himself in his own way through immersion into very many strata of our historic experiences, and tried to wield them together in terms of his definition of modern India. Prof. Rasheeduddin Khan has very rightly pointed out about Gandhiji. Gandhiji was very explicit that he was an admirer of world order, because it was an order which was on the ground. His only proposition was to make it horizontal rather than vertical. He said, yes, I am explicitly in favour

of a world order because it essentially defined man's activities for society. It is, of course, some kind of re-interpretation. Gandhiji wanted to convert all Indians into *Shudras*, whereas Tagore wanted to make every Indian into an ideal *Brahmin* namely, the person who is guided by pure reason, pure aesthetics and pure ethical norms. Gandhiji would primarily try to convert every thinker into a worker. The main divide that seems to be there, or has grown increasingly in Indian civilization over the years, is, some kind of divide between thinkers and workers. He was against that. That again is a theoretical construction. I would, therefore appeal to academicians as well as thinkers to go nearer to the people with concepts with which we can grasp the situation so that we are not again rebounded back by our preconceived notions.

Sheela Mohan : The debate has been too academic. As practical steps, I would suggest great emphasis on utilization of the educational process for imparting values of secularism, social justice, inter-communal harmony, humanism, rationalism and scientific temper. For this, Educational system should be reorganised and restructured. It should be linked more closely with planned development and the requirements of weaker sections of our society. Secondly, a national consensus should be built to abjure the use of communal and caste sentiments for political purposes and for rejection of terrorism and violence for attainment of political ends.

A more positive and active role for the media is also necessary for transmitting and building the values of national unity, fraternal harmony and secular polity and also combating the forces of destabilisation. It should expose the designs of groups which generate disaffection and discord amongst different segments of society.

The Administrative machinery should be attuned to respond to the growing needs of the people, on the one hand, and safeguarding their life, limb and property on the other. There should be strengthening of the structure and functioning of the Indian Union by reconciling the legitimate demands of the States with necessary and desirable power of the Centre for working out a pattern of healthy, harmonious plural society, within the frame work of a cooperative federal polity.

These are some of the suggestions which I hope, if implemented, will usher in an era of peace, good will and harmony, and a healthy coherent society.

Radhey Mohan : This discussion has revealed how the roots of the Indian malaise stem from the turbulences in its socio-economic system rather than purely of political origin. With the agrarian economy acquiring an industrial adjunct and significant bulge in the proportion of labour employed in industrial and tertiary sector, the old feudal values are facing the challenge of the new industrial order. The collective conscious with its multilateral social bonds is sliced through by increasing perception of personal rights and opportunities.

These perceptions of individual rights challenge the feudal order of hierarchy at a time when the process of economic growth has increasingly thrown up islands of affluence amid sea of poverty and suppressed wants of the middle class which finds opportunities slipping out of its hands. The rapid urbanisation which has thrown up a huge slum population of three crores packed cheek by jowl around posh colonies provide a social tinder of great and incalculable consequences, often being the originator of much of social unrest and political clout.

This has largely happened because of ineffective planning. There is no meaningful alleviation of the problems of poverty, even if mass starvation has been stemmed. Even the minimum of social services like public health, nutrition, sanitation, drinking water etc, is out of the reach of the bulk of the people, often the allocations for these being sharply cut or misused by officials down the line of command or politicians out for grandiose publicity rather than real public welfare. Social tensions can only be on the rise in a country where half the population is below the poverty line and beyond the reach of the three Rs while some ten per cent have all the fat of the land with a middle ground of largely unemployed and underemployed and ill paid.

In assessing the roots of unrest, one cannot but emphasise the problems of transition of a society mounting from cooperative economy, even though at near subsistence level, to a competitive one impelled by the vision of each one making it grand for himself. The implantation of fierce competition in a social climate of largescale deprivation worsens the tensions already existing in a transforming society. In such a situation power groups which fear their sway over the masses might be weakened, try to fan the fears among the people and succeed in securing their loyalty to sinister causes so that their power over the

people would always remain undiminished. This is the breeding ground of fanaticism, religious bigotry, male dominance etc. Violence is the natural consequence of these increasing tensions.

Fortunately for India, the institutions of democracy provide a safety valve on the one hand and a mould for channeling the regenerative forces of growth along desirable lines. These institutions need to be strengthened so that at all levels of action people are encouraged to think for themselves and take up the challenge of decision making and risk taking. Unfortunately it is this very task of institution building that has suffered in the recent years as all politics had begun to turn around individuals. There have been a running down of all such institutions, the universities have ceased to gain the awe and respect of the people, the judiciary has been subject to corruptive influences, the legislatures are stated to be increasingly dominated by criminal elements, the local self-government institutions are turning out to be inefficient as well as corrupt and in a large number of cases, have been superseded for over a decade. Though autonomy was once considered a means of protecting high values, many a institution has shown that autonomy more often bred corruption and nepotism rather than healthy traditions of highest integrity. All this has led to a lamentation over a people who have lost their moral dimension.

How can mere moral dimension be implanted in the turbulence that sweeps from all sides? There is the question of leadership at all levels. But more than that the moral problem cannot be solved in isolation. A broader reform must begin with economic planning which must be made more participatory and less inclined to favour the already well off. The institutions of self-government at lower levels must be revitalised and made to look inward for solutions. The contribution of culture as an input of growth must be recognised and fostered so that economic quanta come to gain a moral dimension. The education system needs overhauling to align itself closely with the social environment and help students to imbibe the fine cultural values of the people developed over centuries. At the political level the institutional structures envisaged in the Constitution need to be resurrected and revitalised. The diversity of the country should be recognised as its source of strength. A Composite culture flourishing in a medium of democratic institutions all along the line is perhaps the best hope for a rich and effervescent polity to grow.